THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

FEBRUARY 1961

Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JACK WODDIS — THE FORCES OF THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION

M. HOOKHAM — EDUCATION—EIGHTEEN-PLUS

MAURICE DOBB — SOME THEORETICAL PROBLEMS IN PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

F. McKENNA — FATIGUE AND ACCIDENTS

IRWIN ROSS — THE BOW GROUP'S PLANNING PROPOSALS

DISCUSSION: JOHN LEWIS — ON HOW DID MAN ORIGINATE

Monthly 1/6

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxism Today

Vol. 5 No. 2

CONTENTS

		page
	Editorial Comments	33
Jack WODDIS	**The Forces of the African Revolution** ... ... Analysis of the various sections of the African people involved in the national liberation movement.	39
M. HOOKHAM	**Education—Eighteen-plus** ... Proposals for higher education arising from the Communist Party Conference in December 1960.	45
Maurice DOBB	**Some Theoretical Problems in Planning Economic Development** ... ... Examines particularly the alternative forms of economic development for the underdeveloped countries.	50
F. MCKENNA	**Fatigue and Accidents** ... ... Discusses attempts made for a scientific study of accidents through fatigue.	57
Irwin ROSS	**The Bow Group's Planning Proposals** ... ... Discusses the latest Bow Group pamphlet *Let our Cities Live*.	59
DISCUSSION:		
John LEWIS	**On How Did Man Originate** ...	62

Editor John Gollan

Assistant Editor
James Klugmann

Editorial Board
Professor J. D. Bernal
Emile Burns
Gabriel Carritt
Maurice Cornforth
Maurice Dobb
Jack Hendy
Arnold Kettle
John Lewis
Frank McKenna
John Mahon
Alan Morton
Frank Stanley
Professor George Thomson

Editorial correspondence
James Klugmann,
16 King Street, W.C.2.

Advertisements
Margaret Williamson,
above address.

Orders and Subscriptions
usual agents or
Central Books Ltd.,
37 Grays Inn Road,
London, W.C.1.

Subscription rates
Six issues 10s. 6d.
Twelve issues 21s.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editorial Comments

THE Marxist-Leninist conception of imperialism has, up till recently, come under heavy criticism from those adherents of the "managerial revolution" theory who are out to exalt the "professional manager" as the key figure in the modern monopoly set-up, and to diminish the importance of financial control in the monopolies and indeed to deny the existence of a "financial oligarchy" at all.

Yet if an article on Belgium by Mr. Tom Stacey in the *Sunday Times* of January 8th is correct, financial oligarchies seem to be dominating and mismanaging that country in the most outrageous fashion.

There is for example the finance-capitalist giant, the Société Générale, which controls 40 per cent of Belgian coal, 50 per cent of its steel, 65 per cent of non-ferrous metals and 35 per cent of electricity generation: it is also the major owner of the resources of the Congo.

Then there is a holding company called the Groupe Solvay, which has chemical interests all over the world, including a heavy share in Britain's I.C.I. Brufina-Confinindus has large interests in steel, coal, electricity, chemicals, glass and engineering. Banque Lambert is a holding company with big interests in oil refining. It is alleged that about two dozen wealthy families control the Société Générale, Brufina-Confinindus and the Banque Lambert.

One feature of the policy of these companies is that very little of the surplus value extracted from the Belgian workers is used to modernise Belgian industry. It goes abroad to countries where a higher return is obtainable. The Société Générale, for instance, invested fairly heavily in non-ferrous metal and cement firms in Canada.

Now this raises a very interesting question regarding the claim of Belgium and other countries dominated by monopoly capitalism to be considered democracies. If those in control of the industries of a country decide that little or nothing should be done to modernise these industries and that capital shall be exported, to modernise or rationalise industries elsewhere, they may, for their own private profit, be sabotaging the welfare of their own people. Yet in the so-called Belgian democracy, as for that matter the so-called British democracy, the people have no voice in such decisions, Parliament has no voice and the Government keeps silent.

The most vital questions are decided behind the backs of the people, which in its way should help to explain why the Communists refer to the existing political arrangements as "bourgeois democracy", i.e. a form of parliamentary democracy working primarily in the interests of the monopolists.

A similar state of affairs exists in Britain, where the economy is handicapped by its meagre gold and dollar reserves, and yet these reserves cannot be built up because certain groups of monopolists insist on exporting more capital abroad than is justified by the state of the balance of payments on current account. This export of capital also reduces the amount available for reinvestment in Britain.

A "Belgian Solution" for Britain

It is not only in Belgium that capitalists are tempted to recoup their losses by attacking the working class. Britain is in some ways lagging behind in the re-equipment of its industries, and Mr. Graham Hutton in *The Times Review of Industry* suggests that it would help if the surtax payers paid less tax and the mass of the people paid more. The suggestion is that if they got tax reliefs the surtax payers would rush to modernise British industry.

But look, chums! In 1949 British companies made a gross profit of £2,395 million. The United Kingdom tax on the total income of these companies, including tax on dividends paid out by those companies, was £981 million, or 40 per cent of gross profits. In 1959 the profit of the same companies was £4,489 million, and taxes on the same basis as above were 26 per cent of gross profits. The undistributed income of those companies *after* tax was £914 million in 1949 and £2,147 million in 1959. More than ample if the wish to modernise industry was there—and in this period the amount of dividend on ordinary shares was doubled.

However, Mr. Hutton seems eager for a Belgian "solution" of Britain's problems, for he demands:

> Revision of the crushing burden of "The Welfare State". . . . Radical revision of our entire fiscal system to switch more taxes on to expenditures, payrolls and National Health cards . . . and to spread the present penal levels of income tax on incomes more broadly. [i.e. to tax those in the top income brackets less and those in the lower, more.]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If Mr. Hutton thinks he can get this policy carried out without a fierce class battle he is in for a rude awakening. Yet there are still people who believe that the class struggle is an outmoded conception.

A.D. 2000

It is rare indeed to be able to read, with pleasure and a measure of agreement, a book written by a prominent German Social Democrat. Such, however, is the case with a recent book, written by Professor Fritz Baade, a Social Democrat member of the West German Bundestag and Director of the Kiel Institute of World Economy, called *The Race to the Year* 2000.

The sub-title of the book, *Our Future—Paradise on Earth or Suicide for Mankind?* is an indication of the author's whole approach. Professor Baade starts from the basic assumption that peace and peaceful coexistence is the first condition, not only for human survival, but for human advance to heights of prosperity and well-being hitherto undreamed of. He writes:

> "The world is in a position so to carry on the struggle against hunger as to eliminate it altogether from the face of the earth . . . the struggle against poverty can, likewise, so be waged that it can be made to vanish. *But the elimination of hunger and poverty is possible only if the third great scourge of mankind—war—is also eliminated*" (p. 254).

Professor Baade, therefore, chose as the theme for his book the investigation of "the possibilities of and prospects for peaceful coexistence". And this investigation, undertaken very thoroughly, leads him to conclude that *the race to the year A.D.* 2000 will be won by the socialist countries. To substantiate his conclusions he advances a number of facts and arguments. First, he calculates that by A.D. 2000 the number of people in the world living under socialism will be very much greater than those living under capitalism. The population in the socialist world will, he considers, have increased from its present 1,000 million to between 2,400 million and 2,600 million, whilst that in the present capitalist world will have increased from 700 million to 1,000 million to 1,200 million. As well as this, Professor Baade envisages the possibility of the colonial and newly liberated countries entering the camp of socialism before A.D. 2000, and in this case, he says, the world population would consist of 4,800 million to 5,200 million living under socialism and only 1,200 million under capitalism.

But the working class of the capitalist world will have its own word to say on remaining under capitalism!

The professor then proceeds to examine the position regarding rates of economic growth, like the development of steel production, of machine tools and industrial equipment, and especially the training of engineers and skilled technicians. He calculates that the present gap between the two social systems in annual economic growth (10 per cent in the case of the Soviet Union, 3.6 per cent in the U.S.A.) will increase to the advantage of the Soviet Union, for, as he points out, "an annual increase of 9 to 10 per cent in industrial production leads to an increase in total production in the course of a few years or decades which borders on the fantastic".

Steel is the basis for the production of machine tools and industrial equipment. The present world output is 260 million tons. According to Professor Baade, it will rise, by 1975, to 540 million tons, and by that time he estimates that the socialist world will account for more than half this figure. And what then by A.D. 2000?

The same gap exists in education. The professor cites detailed figures about the numbers of qualified scientists, engineers and technicians leaving college and university each year in the Soviet Union, in the U.S.A. and in Europe. In each case the Soviet Union has an enormous superiority already, *now*. The consequence of the continuation of such development for the socialist world and for the whole of mankind by A.D. 2000 can only be imagined. On this basis, and on the basis of Soviet superiority in rocketry and other technical fields, the professor emphasises that the Soviet proposals for complete and universal disarmament are made not from weakness, but from strength. Their acceptance, he says, would open up a most wonderful perspective for mankind by the year A.D. 2000:

> "This world of the year 2000 can be a wonderful, a magnificent world. The fight against hunger can be won. Nobody on earth need ever be hungry. Far-reaching disarmament and the elimination of war which it will make possible will give mankind the security for which all peoples yearn—freedom from the threat of mass extermination."

Further Testimonials

Another unsolicited testimonial to Soviet development comes from British machine tool manufacturers. The British machine tool industry has always had a steady customer in the Soviet Union, and, at the present moment, it is executing a number of important orders for that State. The Soviet Union has, however, developed its own powerful machine tool industry, and British machine tool manufacturers believe that they will

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have to face competition from the Soviet side in the not-so-distant future. In a memorandum which they sent to a sub-committee which was investigating certain aspects of the British machine tool industry, they say:

> All the evidence suggests then that the U.S.S.R. is making considerable technological progress and that her machine tool industry is continually being strengthened and extended. Under normal conditions, therefore, it would seem that the Soviet threat will pose serious problems for the machine tool industries of the United Kingdom and the Western countries.
>
> The Soviet competitive threat in the machine tool field falls into two phases, (a) the immediate effect of penetration into the less highly developed countries, and (b) the longer term attempt to achieve technical superiority over the West.

With regard to the less highly developed countries, the machine tool manufacturers state that:

> Individual manufacturers, and even industrial groups in the West, can scarcely be expected to match Soviet financial inducements to countries which are anxious to secure all the extended credits and loans they can get.

On Soviet competition with highly developed capitalist countries they say that:

> The process of attempting to achieve industrial superiority will necessarily involve increased concentration in the Communist bloc on the production of the more advanced types of machine tool and consequently less mass production of the simpler types. All this could mean that longer-term competition between the Communist bloc on the one hand and the countries of the West on the other, may be on a basis which in the West is accepted as more normal; the governing factors being quality, cost and service.

Some years ago few British capitalists would have thought these things possible.

Machine Tool Debacle

The sub-committee of the Machine Tool Advisory Council, to which the memorandum quoted above was submitted, had met to consider the possibility of the British machine tool industry undertaking the mass production of machine tools, which the Soviet Union was said to be operating. The sub-committee arrived at the conclusions: (1) there was not as much mass production of machine tools in the Soviet Union as had been believed; (2) it was mainly of the simpler type of tools; (3) it would not pay Britain or the capitalist countries in the West to adopt similar methods.

Whether this is so we do not know, but in the course of compiling the report the sub-committee investigated the British machine tool industry and disclosed a shocking state of affairs. The British engineering industry is the oldest in the world, and yet its machine tool branch is miserably small and in many cases technically backward. These are some of the criticisms of the sub-committee:

> The criticism is frequently made that too large a proportion of high performance tools in the United Kingdom are either imported or made under licence to foreign design. We consider there is some justification for this criticism.
>
> We believe that the wide extent to which machine tools of foreign design are at present used in the United Kingdom is a symptom of insufficient development effort, since many of them in fact, given the development effort, could have originated in the United Kingdom.
>
> There is a notable shortage of qualified technical staff, particularly engineers, which in our view constitutes a grave weakness. In 1958, ninety machine tool firms employing 30,000 people had a total of only twenty-five graduate engineers.

The sub-committee makes a host of suggestions for work of a fundamental research character, and adds:

> This work may be both costly and highly speculative and can properly be regarded as qualifying for assistance from public funds.

Such is machine tool capitalism. Keep an industry stagnant and un-enterprising (in the main) for half a century, and then call on the taxpayer to come to its relief.

Future of the Cinema

The changes in the cinema industry—smaller attendances, cinemas closing, special performances of more spectacular films—continue, though Board of Trade figures published just before Christmas 1960, indicate a change in the pace of these developments.

Provisional Board of Trade figures showed 350 fewer cinemas by the end of 1960 than a year before (whilst final figures may be higher when all returns are received); however by comparison, some 440 cinemas closed the previous year, so the rate of closing seems to be slowing down. Though cinema attendances in 1960 were about 14 per cent lower than in 1959, the Board of Trade figures show that, allowing for the 350 closures, admissions averaged over all cinemas for 1960 showed a fall of some 4 per cent only compared with the previous year. They comment:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Over the years the decline in the rate of admissions averaged over all cinemas has been slowed down because average cinema size has increased (closures have been proportionately less heavy amongst the larger cinemas); even so it appears that in 1960 the decline in admissions averaged over all cinemas was considerably less than for several years past.

Admissions were provisionally estimated at nearly 10 million on average every week in 1960. The gross takings in admissions were estimated at about £65 million in 1960, dropping only 6 per cent over the year with a certain upward move in average takings in the course of the year. Employment figures for 1960 are not yet available, though the number working in cinemas dropped from 68,000 in December 1958 to 60,200 in December 1959. In an industry where the highly-publicised star salaries are very high, the other extreme applies in cinema wages, there being considerable part-time work amongst cinema staffs.

With regard to the future, the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association submitted evidence to the Pilkington Committee expressing opposition to an extension in the television services and particularly in relation to pay-TV. The exhibitors maintain that if further television services are made available there will inevitably be a great many more cinemas closed. The C.E.A., representing 2,868 cinemas out of 3,350, in their submission to the Pilkington Committee point to the ten million cinema tickets sold weekly and state:

> Thus, in expressing this opposition, which is understandably based to a large extent on self-interest, exhibitors feel that the value of the cinema to the masses as an important social amenity cannot be overlooked.

This is a wise point for them to make, as whispers in ruling-class circles suggest that if the time has not yet arrived when the cinema is no longer of importance to them in influencing the people, TV is already of far greater importance to the ruling class.

The C.E.A. add a rider that exhibitors would like to avail themselves of any developments which they could afford in the electronic dissemination of film and other programmes to cinemas. This could, for instance, be by means of the Eidophor process, an increasing number of advertisements for which have been displayed in the technical trade press. With this process cinemas could put on special shows of sporting events and pageantry "live", as they were taking place, so attracting some people back into the cinemas.

The cinemas' opposition to pay-TV was sharply criticised in December by John Davis, Managing Director of the Rank Organisation—who suggested that exhibitors should get into it and be part of it. Pay- or toll-TV, he said, is going to be the "home cinema".

Davis also warned against drawing the wrong conclusion from recent cinema statistics. He said that a big percentage of audiences consisted of women, and asked whether a continued falling away might not be attributed to unnecessarily brutal films, which, he believed, the women disliked. The fact that Davis was speaking purely as a businessman need not lessen one's welcome for his forthright condemnation of "brutality, unnecessary close-ups of punchings in the stomach and so on." It is interesting to note that in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, which was not a Rank film, but shown on the A.B.C. circuit, the director, Karel Reisz, studiously avoided showing any close-ups in the sequence where two soldiers beat up the hero of the picture.

Pay-TV

While these are some of the trends—conflicting at times—that apply to the cinema, further problems are likely also to be faced in the future over the possible introduction of "Coin-in-Slot" or other forms of "Pay-TV". Experiments in the United States and Canada show the need for a large number of first-class films—not just old re-issues—to be shown to attract people to pay for this form of entertainment in their own homes. Once again, Britain has the opportunity of becoming a leading recorded entertainment centre of the world.

For years, some sections of the film industry in Britain have shown an interest in Pay-TV. The Granada Group (in almost the same breath as announcing the doubling of their profits for the year ending April 1960), in late November, were shown to be among the subscribers of a new million-pound company which has acquired all British rights to the Telemeter Pay-TV system, developed by the American film company, Paramount. The new company, called *British Telemeter Home Viewing Ltd.*, also included British Lion Films Ltd., the *Financial Times* and certain associated companies, Schlesinger Investments Ltd. (with which Sir Michael Balcon is associated), and N. M. Rothschild & Sons; Paramount would hold only a minority interest. Previous to this grouping, the Rank Organisation and Rediffusion Ltd. formed *Choice-View*, and a group of independents, which included leading film men, formed *British Home Entertainments*. E.M.I. of Hayes, Middlesex, have shown leading film exhibitors TV-Relay.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cinema interests face a dilemma, too, in this: whether Pay-TV should be opposed as a deadly rival to the cinema; or whether, since so many film people are interested, it may well come, and, therefore, one may as well sell one's cinema, and use the capital so obtained to buy into Pay-TV and install the equipment in people's homes. *A Cinema in every home* would be their new battlecry.

Recapitalisation may not be so simple, but technical developments from America open up a number of interesting possibilities. It is reported that over a single wire to one's TV set, three programmes can be fed—the set would still be able to get B.B.C./TV and commercial programmes as well. Two of these "piped" programmes would be of a high-class "international standard" and would have to be paid for; a third would be a "free" local programme, which, if it lacked quite the polish of the streamlined programmes that accompanied it on the wires, would attract precisely because of its local "parish pump" bias. With these local aspects, the whole deal could well become an amalgam of local finance, finance from former cinema-owners, and finance from others in the entertainment industry.

Developments, of course, would await the decisions not only of the Pilkington Committee but also of the Government in general, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in particular. Although the latter will, no doubt, decide the matter on such grounds as whether "the country can afford" such an extension of the people's leisure spending, it is a rather fascinating thought that it was the present Chancellor of the Exchequer who over a decade ago submitted to the Committee on Broadcasting of the day (under Lord Beveridge) a minority report, advocating the break-up of the "monopoly" of the B.B.C. and advocating commercial TV—and, although in a minority of one, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd saw the Government adopt his views, rather than those of the majority report.

All Discoveries are Useful

We used, in the twenties and early thirties, often to be told by reactionaries and sceptics that the Soviet Union would be unable to develop modern techniques and modern applied science. But when reality had refuted them, they changed their tune and, in the fifties, we were told that, whilst it was true that Soviet scientists, technicians and skilled workers were leaping ahead in the applied sciences, in the practical sides of science, this was at the expense of neglect of deeper research and of "pure" science.

An interesting commentary on this nonsense is contained in an article, published by *Izvestia*, by Academician Mikhail Lavrentiev, President of the Siberian branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. Now that the Soviet Union is leading the world in many branches of science, he writes: ". . . it is worth thinking about the roads to scientific discoveries and how to make them still wider." As a rule, he continues, we cannot predict new discoveries. We can only say with a greater or lesser degree of probability where we can expect them. But to prevent this precious catch from slipping out of our hands, we must set a sufficiently wide trap. *"We must develop science on as broad a scale as possible."* We must not only, he continues, devote our efforts to problems the urgency of which is clear, "we must also tackle problems of pure science. We must search for new phenomena in nature. We must hunt for explanations of things that are still a mystery . . . for it is precisely pure science that has enabled man to accomplish and develop his most ambitious projects."

Academician Lavrentiev says that the new discoveries in the structure of the elements of matter, in the pattern of the living cell and in super-high speeds, pressure and temperature, "provide us with more and more levers for carrying out projects which even now seem fantastic." Amongst such projects, he mentions the problem of the earth's crust and how to exploit its "truly stupendous potentialities", how to make use of the earth's internal heat. At Pauzhetka, he says, a power station is being built to generate electricity from the heat of a volcano.

Mathematical logic, writes the Academician, "with its strange problems and unexpected, and at times paradoxical, ways of posing questions, was regarded, even only recently, as a superior kind of mental game. Now it is the basis for programmes that convert electronic computers into controlling machines, facilitating the automation of labour-consuming and hazardous processes."

The Professor concludes that these and many other examples show that science owes its outstanding achievements precisely to the breadth of its horizons and the sweeping scale of its research. "Every time scientific principles that are apparently hopelessly abstract suddenly find practical application, we have scientists able to catch on to the new trend and rapidly achieve definite results."

We need, declares the Professor, perspective and breadth in the organisation of research. *"There are no useless discoveries."*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But in order to make more discoveries, we must develop science on as broad a scale as possible—and this is one of our educational problems in Britain.

Science under Socialism

Though somewhat tardily, it has now in general been conceded that Soviet science has won many striking successes and is leading the world in many fields. What is much less recognised are the many substantial achievements of science in the other socialist countries.

In this connection the new monthly journal—*Technical Digest*—published by the Czechoslovak Publishing House of Scientific Literature in English (25s. annually), is much to be welcomed. The Chairman of its Editorial Board is Jaroslav Heyrovsky, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1959 for his work on polarography.

The journal tries to give a general coverage of scientific and industrial work, reviews much of the new scientific literature which is appearing in the socialist countries, and is written in a popular style.

A recent editorial reviewed the international co-operation in scientific research which took place during the International Geophysical Year. It also specialises in reporting international scientific conferences held on different subjects in different parts of the world.

The Folk Heritage in Music

Recently published by Lawrence and Wishart —*Composer and Nation* by Sidney Finkelstein— is the first book in English to deeply examine the relationship between "folk" music and "art" music. The author traces the influence of folk music on composers from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, showing how musical form is basically derived from folk song. He gives a critical evaluation of the problems of music in the Soviet Union, and there is a useful chapter on jazz, forecasting that in the music of the future, in a classless society, there will be no "meaningless barriers" between "popular", "folk" and "art" music.

Finkelstein touches on many problems which are left unsolved, particularly in relation to folk music itself. Some might consider that he had underestimated somewhat the importance of national elements other than folk music, or that the analysis of the way in which music expresses the conflicts of society is insufficiently pursued.

But the book is of real importance as a first attempt to present to English-speaking readers the problem of the connection between folk music and musical structure.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The forces of the African Revolution[1]

Jack Woddis

SOME sixty to seventy-five years of imperialist rule have been sufficient to produce deep changes in African society, and the speed with which the national movements in Africa have surged forward is in part due to the very rapidity of these transformations.

The destruction of African traditional agriculture, the drawing of millions into migrant wage labour, the formation of an African intelligentsia and capitalist class—all constituting a process which is by no means complete—have undergone acceleration, particularly since the end of the Second World War. Old forms of society are collapsing and new class forces are being thrown up, forcibly and ruthlessly. And as they emerge from the crucible of colonialism they press ever more persistently against the barriers which would hold them back.

The interests of colonialism have hindered and delayed the economic development of the African territories, prevented their industrialisation, ruined their agriculture, and left them with a distorted economy. Thus all national development has been throttled and the whole people, including often the chiefs, have been hurled into the struggle for national liberation as the essential pre-condition for the advancement of their own class and sectional interests, as well as for the common patriotic interests of them all.

African Workers—the Pace Setters

The working class is still a relatively small minority of the African population, constituting some 12 million to 14 million out of a total population of more than 200 million. Moreover, it is a young class, most workers being of the first generation. But it is a growing force and it has grown, particularly during the last two decades. Most of it, it is true, is migrant labour, but labour migration has a two-fold effect. While, on the one hand, it has delayed the emergence of a large, permanent, stabilised modern proletariat—and this has meant a weakening of the working-class movement—on the other hand it has resulted in the majority of African males, in most of Africa, having experience of wage labour at some stage or other in their lives. In the mines, on plantations, in railways, in factories and on construction sites, they have met migrants from other African territories. They have exchanged experiences, found that they suffer the same common exploitation at the hands of the same masters, and that they have the same aspirations. This has helped to develop a feeling of all-African solidarity which is such a powerful force in present-day African politics.

In many cases the workers have joined trade unions, taken part in strikes, become members of political parties, marched in political demonstrations and voted in elections. Thus, in the busy market-of-ideas in the urban centres they have become new men, with enlarged horizons and an awareness of class interests and class solidarity, and a new national consciousness. On return to the villages they have taken with them their new-found knowledge and experience. The migrant worker is also a migrant peasant, and the African worker-peasant, with knowledge of both worlds, is able to bring to the countryside the spirit and political consciousness that has grown in the towns.

Labour migration exists on such a large scale that millions are involved in this cycle of movement, which brings with it a heightening of political consciousness. Thus the very migrant-labour system, the curse of Africa, becomes the basis for an alliance between workers and peasants, the essential foundation for a powerful national liberation movement.

To maintain their rule over the African workers and to continue their system of exploitation, the imperialists established autocratic rule, introduced pass laws, enacted anti-strike legislation, clamped down a system of racial discrimination which eats into every political, social and economic aspect of the people's lives, and, even when compelled to make some small concessions in the franchise, hedged them around with so many educational and property qualifications as to exclude practically the whole of the working class. The restrictions on the normal functioning of trade unions, which exist in almost all territories in Africa, and the lack of political rights, have

[1] This article is based on the last chapter of the author's recently published book, *Africa—The Roots of Revolt* (Lawrence & Wishart, 21s.).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only served to make the African workers understand more clearly the connection between politics and their own miserable conditions of life and labour. Twentieth-century Africa, especially in the 1950's and 1960's, is very much a political Africa.

The conditions under which they live act as a most rapid educator of the African workers. Every day of their lives the African workers come up against the realities of European exploitation. Ironically enough, the very absence of large African companies—a natural consequence of colonial oppression—turns the African workers in an anti-imperialist direction. It is the European government officials and advisers who back up the employers against the workers and their unions. When the workers go on strike against their shameful conditions, it is European-run newspapers which distort their case and European-led police and troops who fire on the strikers, and arrest their leaders. European warders control the prisons, and if the arrested worker is lucky enough to come up for trial, it is a European judge who passes sentence. All the laws which render the Africans impoverished and deny them justice and human dignity, are the laws of the white man's government. Thus the politics of national independence are driven into the heads of the African workers by their everyday experiences. They cannot avoid it. Starvation wages, national humiliation, batons, bullets, prison—this is commonplace experience for so many workers that inevitably they soon come to realise that no fundamental change in their lives, no social and economic advance, is possible without *political* change, and that the essence of this political change must be national freedom and the ending of the rule of the white overlords.

In Africa, where so many have gone to work at some time or other, and where frontiers are crossed so often by workers seeking employment, the migrant-labour system has become a yeast fermenting not only dissatisfaction but an ever-wider and deepening understanding. The knowledge, the experience, the bitterness and the determination spreads. Unity grows apace, and out of this growing anger, this shared bitter discontent, arises a solidarity of a new kind—a class solidarity intertwined with a strong feeling of common national bonds.

The experience of the African working class, the growth of their understanding and of their organisations, and the great struggles they have waged have, in a very real sense, been the forerunners of the present national movements which are sweeping the continent.

The struggles that have shaken Africa in the past decade—and that will shake her even more in the next ten years—are not purely proletarian struggles, important as may be the participation of the workers in them. They are *national* movements, movements in which whole peoples are involved and in which the aim is not the particular interests of one class or section but the common aspiration of all to end imperialist rule, destroy the colonial system, and open up the way to the national development of each territory.

African Bourgeoisie

An important role in these movements is being played by the African bourgeoisie. It is, of course, true that the national bourgeoisie is still not a powerful force. Its main spheres are agriculture, trading and commerce, and to some extent transport; but as an industrial and manufacturing bourgeoisie it is naturally in an embryonic stage, for industrial development in Africa is everywhere held back by imperialism, and even where it does take place, it is almost completely in the hands of European monopolies.

The small, yet growing, African capitalist class cannot but find itself constantly at loggerheads with the colonial system. As a capitalist class it is naturally concerned with profits. To make profits, it needs control of its own domestic market, and it needs, too, a considerable expansion of that market. No less, it requires to build up its own industry in order to make the goods to supply to that market. But everywhere the African bourgeoisie turns, it finds the imperialists holding the controls in their hands, dominating the market, owning the raw materials of which they rob the country, and shipping in the manufactured goods with which they flood and monopolise the local market. Even where Africans own the raw materials, such as cash crops (only rarely do they own minerals), they find themselves at a great disadvantage, for the imperialist monopolies, which control the world markets, compel the African growers to sell their crops at a low price but to pay highly for the manufactured goods which they need to purchase.

But it is not only through their control of trade within the African territories that the imperialists restrict the growth of African capitalism. By their domination of world markets they are able to manipulate prices in a way which reacts most unfavourably on the African territories. Forced to "sell cheap and buy dear", African territories are robbed of millions of pounds a year through this unequal exchange. This open theft—referred to euphemistically as "unfavourable terms of trade"—enables super-profits to be made by Wes-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tern monopolies, and is a root cause of African poverty. And the very poverty of the African people becomes a further preoccupation of the African bourgeoisie, for the abysmally low purchasing power restricts severely the market which African producers wish to expand.

Just as African producer and trader comes up against the imperialist monopolies and the colonial system within the sphere of trade, so too, in the sphere of production, especially industrial production, there is the same conflict.

Thus the colonial system weighs heavily on the African capitalists who are constantly impelled to raise the banner of national independence in order to further their own class aims and develop the national economy.

However, although cribbed, cabined and confined by the colonial system, the African capitalist class has nevertheless become stronger, especially in the post-war period. In Nigeria, for example, in addition to farming, trade, banking and commerce, a considerable share of road transport is in the hands of African entrepreneurs, albeit small-scale. (This, incidentally, is also true of Ghana.)

The growth of the African bourgeoisie is also particularly marked in Ghana, of course, and in certain regions of French West Africa, notably the Ivory Coast. It is noticeable, too, in Uganda, and to a somewhat lesser degree, in Kenya and Tanganyika, where one should not ignore the effect of land-consolidation schemes in these territories which have made possible the emergence of a stratum of African freehold farmers growing coffee and other cash crops. In the Belgian Congo, the Union of South Africa, and in the Central African Federation, it has been extremely difficult for an African capitalist class to appear. Yet even here African enterprises have emerged, despite political and legal limitations.

Generally speaking, however, the African bourgeoisie is a weak force *vis-à-vis* imperialism, especially in east, central and southern Africa.

But, despite its weakness, it is a force which has entered the political arena and which has begun to play an important part in the national movement. In fact, in most territories it is taking a leading role and exercises a political influence far in excess of its numerical or economic strength. Even in those territories where the African bourgeoisie is weakest, and where the movements tend to be led by doctors, teachers or lawyers, these professional and petty-bourgeois sections often reflect much more the outlook and class aspirations of a would-be national bourgeoisie than they do that of the workers and peasants who constitute the majority and the main force of the national movement.

This influence of the national bourgeoisie over the whole movement, including, to a considerable degree, over the working class and trade unions, arises partly from the fact that the imperialist rulers give a certain encouragement to this class, in the hope that it will be more ready to compromise, and partly owing to the stage reached by the African working-class movement, which, in most territories, has not yet been able to develop its own political party nor to create, on a wide scale, a clear-cut, defined and mature class outlook, as distinct from a purely anti-colonial one.

African Intelligentsia

The post-war period has also seen an increase in the number of African intellectuals. The African people have made heroic efforts to secure education for themselves, even on occasions setting up their own schools to make up for the appalling deficiencies in official education for Africans. Many an African mother has slaved from morn to night doing domestic work, taking in laundry, making some native brew on the side, all to earn money to give her son an education. Something of the heartbreaking sacrifices which this entails have been described with great vividness and poignancy by Ezekiel Mphalele in his *Down Second Avenue*. Dr. Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah worked as dish-washers in the United States in order to complete their education. Dr. Hastings Banda walked hundreds of miles, as a young man, from his native Nyasaland, to seek education in the Union of South Africa and later to complete it overseas. Many a national leader in Africa can tell similar stories.

Cultural organisations have come into existence and national newspapers been established in the past twenty years. Some institutions for higher education have been set up in a number of African territories, and this too has resulted in an increase in the number of African intellectuals—although as far as the British, or former British possessions are concerned, it is noticeable that it is in Ghana and Nigeria, where more control over such matters has passed to the African people themselves, that the most progress has been recorded.

Of course, the imperialists, in their hope of encouraging a section of educated, "responsible" Africans who would act as political allies, have unavoidably played a certain role in the establishment of higher education. But it has been for a handful only—and its aim has been to turn out an African photograph of a European original,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rather than to assist the cultural progress of the African people themselves.

But as against this tendency, there is also the gradual identification of the African intellectual (especially in those territories in southern, eastern and central Africa where white settler domination and extreme racial discrimination exists) with the African masses and with the struggle for national independence and advancement.

For colonialism in its own way presses just as heavily on the African intellectual as it does on the worker, the peasant and the African farmer and capitalist.

The humiliations, insults and indignities suffered daily by African intellectuals cannot but play their part in impelling them towards involvement in the struggles of the whole people. When white doctors from Southern Rhodesia came to work in Nyasaland, following on Federation, they insisted on African doctors no longer being permitted to wear white medical coats, as they had done previously. Frequently, the trained African, with many years' experience behind him, sees a raw, white recruit step ahead of him—at several times the rate of pay. The struggle for the Africanisation of government departments in Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan—and soon to open out in other territories—is one long story of stubborn resistance by entrenched interests against ending a situation of white privilege based on no other consideration than those of racial discrimination.

It is the two-fold nature of the pressures on African intellectuals—to have privileges over the rest of his people, yet be subordinated to the European rulers—that explains the hesitations, indecisions, or sudden shifts of position from one extreme to another which so often characterise their role in the national movement. Yet their influence is a very important one, and there is not a single national political party of the African people, in any of the territories, in which intellectuals will not be found playing a significant and often leading role.

One has only to enumerate some of Africa's most prominent national figures—Dr. Nkrumah, Dr. Azikiwe, Dr. Banda, Dr. Chirwa, the late Dr. Moumie, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Kenneth Kaunda, and so on—to see how important is this participation.

The Peasantry

What of the rural African, the destitute land-hungry peasant, and the cash-cropping farmer? For these constitute the majority of the African people. Seventy-five years of imperialism have dealt them devastating blows. The robbery of land, sometimes of most of the land (as in the Union of South Africa or in Southern Rhodesia), and always of the best land (the Kenya White Highlands symbolising this land-grabbing), has been accompanied, especially in East, Central and Southern Africa, by the herding of the Africans into the worst lands, frequently swamp lands, or just as often waterless, certainly with poor soils, and always away from the line of rail or the main roads.

Thus, in much of the continent the African people have been pushed into land which, even with enormous capital resources and the utmost use of modern machinery and technique, would require a prodigious effort to make fertile. Without such resources, and with the added burden of discriminatory price and credit policies and frequent restrictions as to which crops he may grow, the African peasant sinks deeper and deeper into the mire.

Compelled by absolute poverty as well as the necessity to obtain cash to pay the poll tax (obligatory on all adult males) and to buy clothing and other essentials, including simple farm implements, the African male is compelled to leave his land periodically in order to take up wage labour in European mines, plantations, or urban enterprises.

As a consequence, the villages and Reserves are largely populated by women, children and old men. Traditional African agriculture involves much heavy work, including the climbing of trees to lop off branches for burning to make ash for seed beds, the construction of fences to keep out animals, and so on. Women, children and old men are unable to cope with this work. Thus, the decline of African agriculture becomes a catastrophe.

How near the edge of catastrophe African agriculture has been forced by the land robberies and the devastating blows of the migrant-labour system which, like a giant grab, constantly dips, scoops and denudes whole villages of their manpower, is strikingly indicated by a United Nations Report in 1953,[2] which says:

> ". . . where migrant labour has been drawn from the indigenous agricultural economies in high proportions, this has often had a deleterious effect on output and on farming practices, giving rise to a *vicious circle in which the outflow of labour reduced productivity, and falling productivity increases still further the pressure on workers to seek wage employment.*"

[2] *Aspects of Economic Development in Africa*, March 20, 1953, p. 67. U.N. Document E/2377.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Much of the African countryside lies in ruins. Soil erosion spreads like a foul disease, and on his dwindling lands the African peasant sinks deeper and deeper into poverty. His very poverty becomes an additional barrier to economic development, preventing him buying implements or seeds to improve his farming, denying him the possibilities of fertilisers or irrigation projects, and periodically compelling him to abandon his poor fields to seek wage labour.

The widespread agrarian crisis in Africa, which is a natural consequence of colonial rule, has been to some extent concealed by the migrant-labour system, just as emigration over the years successfully masked the agrarian crisis in Eire.

One result of this is that the African peasantry has not yet taken part in the national movement as a separate, conscious and organised political force. No large-scale, sustained peasant revolts have taken place in Africa as they did, for instance, between the two world wars, in China, Burma, the Philippines, Indo-China and Indonesia, although there have been, in the last thirty years, a number of local, sporadic outbursts in Africa, often against taxation or land seizures by European settlers.

The African peasant has, in the main, done his fighting against imperialism in the towns, as a migrant worker.

Thus it is that the names associated with the history of Africa's anti-colonial struggles are mainly those of urban or mining centres—Accra, Lagos, Enugu, Jos, Johannesburg, Mombasa, Nairobi, Dar-es-Salam, Tanga, Wankie, the Copper Belt, Douala, Dakar, Conakry, Leopoldville, Freetown, and Bathurst. Only more recently, as in Kenya after the 1952 emergency, in Algeria and the French Comeroons (now the Cameroun Republic) in the past few years, and in Sekhukhuneland, Zeerust and Pondoland, in the Union of South Africa, has the rural African, *as a peasant,* begun to be drawn more directly into the anti-imperialist struggle.

Even the better-off African farmer, growing cash crops for an export market, lives in constant fear and insecurity, his life dominated by the big imperialist monopolies who determine the price they will pay him for his crops and the price he must pay for the manufactured goods he needs to purchase.

The same difficulty faces African farmers in every territory under imperialist rule. In every direction they turn they come up against the realities of white domination—their best land taken by white settlers, or given as concessions to big European monopolies, the imposition of restrictions regarding what they may grow, how they may market their crop and the price they will get for it, denied the right to move freely throughout the land of their birth—in every way oppressed by conditions from which there is no escape while imperialism continues its rule.

The Chiefs

There is an assumption among many people that all African chiefs are on the side of reaction, that they represent the forces of feudalism and tribalism and are therefore hostile to the struggle for African independence. Many chiefs do, of course, play such a role, not only relatively powerful ones in West African territories, but even lesser chiefs who are often mere government appointees. But to dismiss all African chiefs as reactionaries would be a distortion of fact.

From the very start of Africa's resistance to European imperialism there have been kings and chiefs who led their people in opposition to foreign rule. Yet it was not merely in the first stage of resistance to imperial conquest that many chiefs played a progressive role. Throughout the twentieth century there have been examples of chiefs siding with their people against particular exactions or acts of repression by the authorities, especially in defence of land or in opposition to taxes, as, for example, Chief Bambata's anti-tax rebellion in Natal in 1906, when the Government forces massacred four thousand Africans, including Chief Bambata. Seven years later the African National Congress was born at Bloemfontein, and among its first supporters were a number of chiefs.

Notwithstanding these examples, it can be said, broadly speaking, that for the first half of this century imperialism was able to make use of the institution of chiefs for its own ends. The introduction of indirect rule, combined with the deposition of unwilling chiefs, and backed by imperialist arms, proved sufficient in this period to preserve the colonial system.

In the last decade, however, as the movement for national independence has grown stronger, and as the issues around which this struggle is being fought have pressed sharper and sharper, so have the chiefs found themselves, in a number of cases, placed in an acute dilemma.

In many territories the use of chiefs, converted into paid Civil Servants to act as imperial puppets who would hold the African people in check, is no longer possible to the extent that it was in the past.

The dilemma of the chiefs today, and the attitude taken by many of them in Nyasaland towards the national struggle of their people is well expressed in a letter in which Chief

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

M'Mbelwa explained to Kanyama Chiume his opposition to Federation:

> "I am a Paramount Chief of 190,000 people, and how foolish I would be to support the Government and be pleased to see my people being terrorised with guns and shot! *Can I be a Paramount Chief of dead bodies?*" [Own italics—J.W.] (Sangor, Clyde: *Central African Emergency*, London, 1960. p. 9.)

In many other territories the same trend is to be noticed of chiefs turning away from the imperialist governments; while those who remain "loyal" to their white rulers become so discredited that their utility and effectiveness is extremely limited.

As long as the struggle was at a more elementary stage, when the issues were not so sharp and clear nor the whole people yet drawn into battle, the system of indirect rule or native administration as a prop of imperialism was workable. But the strains and stresses have become too great. Now in this territory, now in that, the chiefs face the parting of the ways: To ally themselves with the new upsurge, or to remain with the sinking ship of colonialism? There is no third path.

Speaking historically, and looking at the entire period of imperialist rule in Africa up to the present great revolt against colonialism, it is clear that the use of chiefs as a mainstay of Western rule in Africa is dying. Some, of course, will remain with their colonial masters to the bitter end. Some, too, will try and evade the responsibility of choice even at this late hour. Some will resist authority—and be deposed. Others will attempt to hold back progress—and find their powers drastically curtailed by the forces of African independence, as in Guinea and Ghana. But in no territory, no matter what attitude they adopt, can the chiefs any longer be regarded as safe or reliable subalterns of imperialism. For them, too, the old world is dying.

The African People are Standing Up

Thus, Africans, as a whole, have reached the point of no return. The old life has been destroyed—and there can be no going back. Africa has been drawn inexorably into the money economy by the forcible actions of imperialism. The destruction of old classes and the formation of new ones is going ahead.

The system of imperialist exploitation and colonialism has brought the African people to the edge of the abyss. It has produced a discontented proletariat, a ruined peasantry, a cramped bourgeoisie and a thwarted intelligentsia.

It has become impossible for the majority of Africans to find a haven and security on the land. Nor can they find security in wage labour in the mines, plantations and urban areas.

The African intelligentsia and the emergent capitalist, too, find at every turn that their aspirations and advancement are checked. For them, too, colonialism offers little hope.

This shared conviction of all progressive classes in African society, the recognition that only through their joint struggle can they succeed in defeating their common enemy, engenders national feeling and speeds up the national consolidation of the peoples. Tribal loyalties, though still not without influence and utilised very often by imperialism for reactionary ends, are melting in the crucible of the anti-colonial struggle. The concentration of large masses of African people in towns and mining centres, the development of capitalist relations right in the heart of African society, the creation of national and class organisations which group people together independently of any parochial or tribal affiliations—all this is breaking down tribal barriers. National and class interests have now come to the fore, and nations are being formed. Class interests and aspirations have become merged with national interests, and the cry for national independence has been taken up by the whole people.

The people of Africa can no longer bear to go on living in the old way. Colonialism has squeezed them dry and life has become impossible. The daily humiliations to individual and nation alike can no longer be tolerated. Held back economically, culturally, socially and politically, each class and section is driven to the inescapable conclusion that if they are to live and grow, then colonialism must go.

But equally, the imperialist rulers can no longer rule in the old way. They twist and turn to seek a solution, the rifle in one hand and the restricted ballot paper in the other. They offer a political post under white domination or tutelage, coupled with the threat of prison. While they talk of advancing the people to independence, they lock up the people's independence fighters and strive to uncover a handful of African puppets who will help them to adorn themselves with the fig-leaf of democratic respectability.

But all this cannot stop colonialism hurtling down the road to ruin and disaster. Each fresh attack on the African people, each new wave of repression, only serves to increase the anger, the bitterness, the determination and resolve of the African people to win their freedom, now, "in our time," this year. As it feels the ground slip beneath its feet, imperialism attempts to keep

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its grip by making a concession here and a concession there. But each paltry concession is taken by the African people and used as a platform for further demands, as a stepping-stone to further concessions. The imperialists hesitantly open the door an inch, hoping to keep it that way. But once ajar, the door can no longer be shut. The African stands with his powerful calloused foot firmly planted in the doorway, and at his back stands all the misery and horror of the sixty million who died or were taken in slavery, the centuries of massacres and robbery, the whip-lash, the death camps, the finger-printed passes, the ruthless exploitation in field and mine, the starvation, disease and illiteracy, the cultural degradation and national humiliation, the attempt to crush the African personality and maintain Africa in perpetual helotage.

But twentieth-century barbarism, with all its Western refinements, cannot determine the course of history. Africa is not going back. It is going relentlessly forward. Africa, in fact, has reached the stage of revolution—of the overthrow of colonialism. The African people are standing up.

Education—Eighteen-Plus

M. Hookham

IT would seem, at least to non-scientists, to be a reasonable deduction from Boyle's law that the natural resultant from an increased pressure of demand for places in the university on the given volume of those places would lead to a rise in the heat of controversy. The material that has been published on this subject suggests that this is so.

The twin forces of the bulge (the absolute increase in the number of young people at the university entrance age) and of the trend (the relative increase in the numbers of young people continuing their education up to the sixth form level) have considerably increased the number of those who both want to continue full-time education after eighteen and who are qualified by present standards to do so. The battle for increased educational opportunity, which was in the last decade fought out at the point of eleven-plus, is now also being fought out at eighteen-plus. It affects all kinds of higher education but the main engagement is being fought over university entrance. The schools are now producing at least one-third as many candidates qualified for admission to a university more than the universities can absorb. The universities, faced with more candidates than they can accept, have been driven to the panic measure of selecting those candidates who can show from some rather limited evidence that they are the best. Those who fail on these tests scramble for places in other institutions of higher education or drop out of this race and join in the job hunt.

The criteria for university entrance most commonly employed are the marks awarded in the Advanced Level General Certificate of Education examination (usually in two or three subjects), the assessment of the candidate by the head of his school and the evidence of breadth of study of other subjects (as shown for example in the Ordinary Level General Certificate of Education examinations). There has been considerable argument about the suitability of these tests for selection, and also about the effects on education in the sixth forms and in the universities of the intensification of specialisation that results from increasing competition to qualify for admission. Much of this argument is concerned with improving the selective machinery and stops short at that. In the same way that much of the argument about selection at eleven-plus was carried on without concern for its effects on the work of the junior schools and the secondary schools, much of the present argument ignores the effects of selection at eighteen-plus on the work of sixth forms and of the universities. It determines the syllabus to which the sixth form works, and conditions the way in which it will be studied. Arising from this it determines the foundations on which the universities have to build when the student arrives there.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Scientific and Technical Revolution

At the same time that this increased competition for entrance to the university is taking place, there is a serious disturbance of the established attitudes to courses and syllabuses resulting from the scientific and technical revolution through which society is now passing. The enormous potential of knowledge and skill, which encourages thought about doubling the standard of living in twenty-five years, will not be realised without a substantial change in the rate of production of that knowledge and skill at the level of higher education. We need many more scientists and technologists—and this is almost universally admitted—but we need many more teachers from the primary schools upwards. Every one of the old and new professions will need a faster rate of recruitment in the future than it had in the past. Can these ever-growing numbers of students be accommodated in the system, and how best can they be educated? These are the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the problem of eighteen-plus, and it is difficult to separate them.

Some of the quantities are known, and there is little problem in seeing how they can be met in practice. More buildings and equipment are needed to raise the number of places in universities from just over 100,000 now to 175,000 in 1965, and about 300,000 in 1970. This target should include the expansion of university level work in technical colleges and colleges of advanced technology—the integration of this work with the universities and the development of certain technical colleges as universities. The students to fill these places will be forthcoming in the future if the additional buildings and equipment are provided to raise the school-leaving age to sixteen and to make possible the fullest development of talent in a comprehensive school system. Even by the existing inadequate system, it has been shown by the evidence in the Crowther Report, this talent can be produced, but it is at present not being given enough opportunity for further development. The evidence before the Crowther Council showed that a high proportion of the ablest children have been leaving school before they reach sixteen. The evidence from the Anglesey comprehensive school system shows that some half of the entire age group have been able to show results in the General Certificate of Education examination which are only very slightly below the achievement of the average for the rest of the country in the grammar schools covering 20 per cent of the age group.

It is obviously no use producing solutions to these quantitative problems piecemeal. It will be necessary to have a plan to ensure that the required stages of development fit in together, and this will be referred o at the end.

It is equally clear that solutions to these quantitative problems will only work if substantial changes are made in the quality of the education in relation to content of courses and particular subjects studied. Much of what is now taught is arid and meaningless. Part of this may be as a result of syllabuses overloaded with outdated content and part may be the result of the teaching being perverted into what has been called, in a recent report of the University of Birmingham, a preparation of pupils to outwit the examiners by prodigious feats of memory and well-drilled precision in the answering of stereotype questions.

Change the Quality

Both at the school and university levels there is need to look into the content of syllabuses and courses. The development of education has been by a series of improvisations and accretions, starting with the basic humanities of the old aristocratic public and grammar school, and adding piecemeal the nineteenth-century middle-class interests in science and technology. As the need was felt, so was the course of study tacked on as a narrow special interest to the others of more or less the same kind. Seldom was there any concern for the problems of teaching the subject in such a way that the student could understand. This specialisation has been maintained in spite of much educational criticism, because it is a cheap way of satisfying an urgent pressing need. While we laughed at the Chinese who bound the feet of their young daughters so that they would grow up to be dancers, we have been binding the minds of our young people into the narrow specialisation of selected subjects at twelve and thirteen. We were, in turn, producing physical and mental cripples.

Sir Charles Snow has suggested that there are two separate cultures, the literary and the scientific. The average person educated in the one usually knows nothing at all of the other. The expressions and thought processes of the two are not common. It is a startling example of the tendency mentioned above. One could add to it a third culture, that of the social sciences. And within these three distinct cultures there are divisions where the language and thought processes are so different as to make it extremely difficult for a person to cross the dividing lines. Yet for a person to be able to understand the world in which he lives he needs a broad education both at the school and higher levels.

Ten years ago when the General Certificate of Education was instituted it was hoped that the schools would be freed from the strait-jacket of fixed courses and syllabuses to experiment. In practice this hope has not been realised, because of the twin forces of the intensified competition to get admission to a university and the growing tendency towards

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

specialisation which has accompanied this. Beyond the schools, in all fields of higher education, the growth of specialisation has militated against such experiments as those at the University College of North Staffordshire (with its general introductory year) and the General Degree courses offered in most other universities. The strong tradition in the universities which places a high value on the intellectual elite, and on research rather than general education, makes for specialisation rather than breadth. Although the number of young people staying on at school in the sixth forms has been growing much faster than the number of places in the universities, the standards for university entrance tend to dictate what is taught in the sixth forms and also how it is taught. The bottleneck of university entrance is relatively more restricted and the restriction is felt in all aspects of school and university work.

The universities in turn have been driven to make these restrictions more effective. The rungs of the ladder to higher education which the young person is expected to climb are set further and further apart and become more and more formidable.

The formal requirements of two passes at Advanced Level and three passes at Ordinary Level might serve both as a leaving certificate at eighteen and a qualification for university entrance. The standards have, however, had to be raised to make it impossible for these two purposes to be served by the same examination. Faculty requirements have been instituted to make the process more selective and the formal entrance requirements are no longer the real test.

One result of this is that the qualification to gain a place varies from one university to another, and from one department of a university to another. It is necessary for a sixth-former to apply to a number of universities with the hope that he will be lucky at one of them. The head of a school with a sixth form of 200 may now well spend the bulk of his time helping his sixth-formers over these complicated hurdles of university entrance. As the report of the University of Birmingham (referred to above) says, teachers "not unnaturally regard it as their primary duty to get students accepted into a university".

The direct results of all this are neurosis, overwork and misdirection of effort in the sixth forms, and increasing complaints from the universities that the students arrive there ill-fitted for the courses they have elected to follow. When a student at school has been driven to drop a number of the basic school subjects as early as the third form in order to concentrate effort to reach the higher standards of the Advanced Level examinations, he is bound to be the poorer in mental development when he arrives at the university. He finds that he has often to repeat in his first year at the university much of the work he has already done in the sixth form. It is no wonder, therefore, that many of them fail to show the development expected of them and are rejected by the universities at the end of their first year. The natural development of their studies has not taken place, and they suffer as a direct result.

Proposed Solutions

These problems have now been long enough with us for there to be a widespread recognition of them and a number of solutions to some of them have been advanced. One such partial solution is contained in the Third Report of the Secondary Schools Examination Council, 1960. The Council is set up by the Ministry of Education to control the nature and development of examinations in the secondary schools; it consists of representatives of the Ministry, the local authorities, the universities, public schools, professional associations of teachers and the school inspectorate. It might be expected from its composition that it would be biased towards selective education and educational privilege.

The Report takes as its starting point a view of the ten years of experience of the General Certificate of Education examinations. It refers to the difficulties which the present problems inflict upon the schools, including the heavy educational burdens, chaos, uncertainty and stress, the tension created by mark grubbing, the multiplicity of requirements, the over-weighting of Advanced Level syllabuses, and the difficulties experienced in trying to broaden sixth-form studies. It attributes these to the unsatisfactory nature of the Advanced Level examination as a selective mechanism which has given rise to inflated faculty requirements and college entrance examinations. No reference is made throughout the Report to the problems of university expansion.

In it are repeated many of the sterile arguments of the earlier discussions about the eleven-plus examinations, which have now been largely discredited. The Report suggests that the poor correlation between Advanced Level results and university performance shows the Advanced Level examination to be "too blunt an instrument for prediction". This examination, it is alleged, puts a premium on achievement (it is extraordinary how selectors seem consistently to detest achievement) which obscures real "intellectual ability, ability to think in the subject". Innate intellectual ability or intelligence, which eluded the testers at the eleven-plus examination, has become the elusive pimpernel of the eighteen-plus testers. We are back at the old attempt to distinguish between achievement and intellectual ability, and no one has been able to show how it is possible to distinguish between them. The Report itself is very confused in references to the overloaded syllabuses and the need

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to lighten them at the same time as to try to make them a more searching test.

Its recommendations, as one would expect, are superficial. To combat the evil of mark grubbing (resorting to all the tricks of the trade to capture a few more marks) it is proposed that percentage marks should not be given and in their place there should be five grades of pass. The two highest grades, which it is anticipated will be reached by about 25 per cent of the entrants, "might be regarded as part of the evidence" for selection for Honours courses, and the arbitrary drawing of a line at this level might well lead to an even greater concentration on mark grubbing to make sure of "passing". There are, however, other reasons of administrative convenience which appear to be the real underlying justifications for this proposal.

The second proposal appears to be a little more substantial. It is suggested that candidates for entrance to a university should, in addition to their Advanced Level papers, sit one special paper in the subject in which it is wished to specialise at the university. This special paper will be based on the same syllabus as the Advanced Level paper but it will be "specially designed to test a candidate's intellectual grasp and capacity to think in his subjects". The performance on this paper will earn a supplementary grading only for those who have had the three top grades on the Advanced Level paper and distinction or high merit on the special paper—about 15 per cent of the total entry.

So the intensified cramming of the first proposal is married to an even more detestable form of cramming of pre-digested answers for semi-philosophical, semi-interpretative questions in the second proposal. No one should underestimate the resource of teachers at bay when defending their young! There is no device yet invented which teachers have not been able to find the answer to when they are trying to win educational opportunity for pupils they know to deserve it.

Why then have the teachers' organisations accepted the proposals of the Report? They have been told that there is no alternative which is practicable, and that it does contain some gains like the proposal to abolish the evil of the present scholarship-level papers for those wishing to get a state scholarship (even though it will revive them in the new special papers and extend these to all candidates for entrance to a university).

There are some vague hopes in the report that syllabuses will be lightened and that only one special paper will be demanded by the universities.

There is a hope that the faculties and departments in the universities will frame their requirements in the future within the limits of the revised Advanced Level examinations, and that the Oxford and Cambridge colleges will drop their special entrance examinations. The latter suggestion was rejected by the representatives of Oxford and Cambridge on the Council.

Both the proposals and the hopes must lead to disappointment. They are both set in terms of improving selection and making more accurate predictions of performance. Even within these terms they have already been discredited by the two pieces of research conducted by Messrs Petch and Forster (*Before Admission*, by J. A. Petch, Liverpool University Press, 6s.; *An Audit of Academic Performance*, by Michael Forster, Belfast University Press, 7s. 6d.).

Even without this evidence it can be shown that both the proposals and the hopes are doomed by the falsity of the statement of the problem, since the real problem is the shortage of places for the increasing numbers who by present standards can be shown to be qualified for admission to a university.

It is important for the Labour movement to understand that all attempts to stiffen entrance requirements (backed by pseudo-scientific theories of selection), which put a premium on premature specialisation and cramming, increase educational class privilege. It is the children of the middle- and upper-class families, plus a few outstanding children of the working class, who will be encouraged by their parents and children to specialise at the absurdly early age of thirteen, fourteen or fifteen for hot-house forcing to prepare them for entrance to a university. In the absence of maintenance grants it is only the wealthier families who can afford to keep their children at school for a third year in the sixth forms, which is becoming increasingly necessary to perfect the art of jumping the higher hurdles of university entrance tests. This also increases discrimination against girls.

The Need for More Places

Once the problem is stated in terms of the need to increase the number of places in all forms of higher education, and especially in the universities, its solution may be seen in real terms. There is much that then needs to be done at the school level. There is first the need to raise the school-leaving age to sixteen, and the provision of adequate maintenance allowances for all children at school over the age of fifteen.

Much needs to be done to improve the staffing ratio and in the provision of equipment and books to make it possible to raise the educational standards in all types of secondary education.

Even when this is done, there will still be the problem of the bottleneck at eleven-plus, and this can only be removed by the establishment of comprehensive schools in all areas. It would then be possible to think in terms of a test of achievement at the age

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of sixteen, which would mean a drastic revision of the present Ordinary Level General Certificate of Education, both in its content and standard, to serve as an effective test of general education for all children up to the age of sixteen.

Those who show a high level of achievement at such an examination (and there is every reason to believe that this would include substantially increased numbers from sources at present untapped) would be able in the sixth forms to carry on their broad education to an Advanced Level examination more broadly based than at present, the results of which would both give the universities a measure of suitability for admission and be an incentive for larger numbers to stay on in the sixth forms to a higher standard school-leaving certificate. This would remove the problem of selection by replacing it with a formal qualification.

There would remain, however, the problem of allocating the places at universities, and this can only be done sensibly by setting up a central organisation to clear up those cases where the combined efforts of schools and students have been unable to find places, or to handle the applications centrally from the first instance (the alternatives of the "clearing up house" or the "clearing house").

Last, in order to permit the broadening of sixth-form courses, it may in a number of cases be necessary to lengthen degree courses in the universities by an additional year, and treat the first year in the university as a preparatory year for the student who wishes gradually to narrow down the scope of his work to a final specialisation. At the same time much needs to be done to reshape the courses for general degrees to give them an educational quality that compares more favourably with the existing special honours courses.

Political Campaign Needed

Very few of these practicable solutions to the real problem of eighteen-plus will be realisable without a considerable political campaign.

It has been suggested that the kernel of the problem is the need to increase the number of university places. At present there are 106,000 places, and the current amounts paid from the national exchequer for university education are £42 million on general maintenance and £23 million for building. In 1953, when there were 83,000 students, the total grant was £25 million. In seven years the grant has slightly more than doubled. On current estimates it will be necessary to double it again in the next seven years if the number of places required is to be realised. At the present rate there will be 50,000 students, qualified by present standards, applying for admission to universities in 1965, for whom there will not be places. It is urgently necessary, therefore, not only to expand existing universities but to set up without delay, at least ten new universities. Additional funds will be required to establish post-graduate schools of study to produce the rapidly increasing numbers of staff for universities and other higher education institutions.

There is no doubt that the country needs every one of these talented young people to have a satisfactory opportunity to continue to the full his higher education. Whilst it is going to be a hard fight to get the resources to provide these additional places for them, it is inevitable that for many of them at present and in the near future these new places will come too late.

Must these tens of thousands of potential university graduates be denied the chance of a higher education and society be denied of the benefit of their improved skill and knowledge? Would it not be possible to establish that they have a deferred right to a university place and make sure that they get it as soon as possible by ensuring a much more rapid expansion of the universities?

The last Minister of Education, Lord Hailsham, first fixed the target of places for 1965 at 125,000, and then raised this to 135,000 by the 1970's. The universities have since then been asked to consider how they might be able to provide between 170,000 and 175,000 places by 1970, but the official target remains 135,000. There is every evidence that the figure ought to be in the region of 300,000. The Government has appointed Lord Robbins to be chairman of a committee to advise them on the needs for higher education, and everyone who is concerned to see that the country has the higher education system it deserves should ensure that this committee is made aware of the real problem and the solutions to it which have been outlined above.

[The Communist Party held a public conference on December 3rd, 1960, on the problems raised in this article and other problems.—*Ed.*]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some Theoretical Problems in Planning Economic Development

Maurice Dobb

THERE has been much talk since the last war about "underdeveloped countries", and economists have taken their share in this talk. The talk has been partly at the level of United Nations' institutions, concerned with technical assistance and advice to underdeveloped areas, partly in ex-colonial countries (like India or Egypt) or semi-colonial countries (like those of Central or South America, at various stages of struggle for national independence) which were discussing national "development plans" to overcome their economic backwardness.

The main contribution of economic theory in America and in Britain to this discussion has been a doctrine of caution and conservatism. This may not be surprising, perhaps; yet the current dogma was so cunningly derived as a direct corollary from widely accepted theories and decked out with commonsense appeal as to be far-from-easy to pick holes in. One might try to outflank it by pointing to this or that neglected consideration. But as a logical structure it was not easily dented by a frontal assault; and any critical remarks were quickly dismissed by the assertion that it was only demonstrating the obvious way in which limited investment funds could be made to go furthest.

Economists' Prescription for Backwardness

Briefly, what the doctrine so plausibly maintained was this. An underdeveloped country is apt to be characterised by acute scarcity of capital and by over-population; the latter showing itself in a reserve of labour (either open or so-called "disguised unemployment") in the countryside, and often both in the countryside and in the towns. What obstructs any increase in the existing stock of capital (by new investment) is the low level of average income per head, and consequently a very narrow margin between income and consumption, from which saving and hence new investment can come.

It followed that in these circumstances such new capital as there was must be used very sparingly, and used in such a way as to afford the greatest possibility of employing surplus labour; since to draw idle labour into production, even if at a very low wage-level, was the best way of increasing output and raising *per capita* national income. To achieve this result, labour must be equipped with the cheapest possible implements, since with limited capital these implements could be made in large quantities. Also those industries must be chosen for development which require relatively little capital compared with labour (a low capital/labour ratio, or a low organic composition of capital in Marx's terminology).

Thus, instead of supplying expensive tractors and combines to agriculture, the most economic policy would probably be to supply a host of cheap spades capable of employing a large quantity of labour at a relatively low level of productivity. Similarly, handicrafts or "cottage industries" were preferable to factory industry equipped with modern machinery, and light industry was preferable to heavy. It might even be better to concentrate upon agriculture and a few agricultural processing industries, which took industry to the localities where labour was to be found and could produce for export, rather than a capital-expensive programme of industrialisation.

Put in more sophisticated terms, such conclusions as these were held to follow from the Theory of Marginal Productivity, according to which the so-called "marginal productivity", and hence price, of the scarce factor (in this case, capital) would tend to be high, and that of the relatively plentiful factor (in this case, labour) to be low. Hence, the cost of products which involved much of the latter and little of the former in their making would tend to be small; and conversely. In the case of underdeveloped countries with surplus labour, methods of production that used much labour and little capital (so-called "labour-intensive" methods) would be accordingly the most "economic" methods. (Indeed, if labour were unemployed, its marginal productivity, as some argued, was zero from a social standpoint, and the *most* labour-intensive methods known were indicated.) Thus, one had a theory of comparative costs of different goods, and of different productive methods, similar to the Theory of Comparative Costs which for a century had been the cornerstone of the case for Free Trade since the days of Ricardo.

Clearly, this kind of argument can have a strong commonsense appeal, and when dressed out as a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

formal theory it had added appeal from the rigour with which conclusion was made to follow premise as in a theorem in geometry. Advice based on it claimed to indicate what was in the long-run interest of the economically backward countries themselves, in whatever way they might finance their development programmes (whether by foreign loans or from their own resources); and such advice was copiously tendered in United Nations' Reports, in expert comments of the World Bank, in the published papers of research institutes and in numerous American textbooks of the past decade on growth and development.

The accent in all this was on primitiveness and on gradualism; on refraining from ambitious plans which sought to break with traditional patterns and routines and to copy "Western" technological methods. And if this seemed to promise a slow rate of advance, and a widening of the gap between rich countries and poor, it only showed the importance of attracting a generous flow of foreign capital (chiefly from U.S.A.), doing nothing to frighten private enterprise and leaning decisively to the American side in the cold war. Needless to say, the "Soviet way of industrialisation", which had introduced modern technology even into agriculture and given priority in development to heavy industry, was quite taboo. Underdeveloped countries must on no account add to the costs and pains of their own advance by imitating anything so unorthodox. To do so could only be a sign of ignorance of true economic principles, or else a wilful sacrifice of such principles to national aggrandisement and ideological prejudice.

Limiting Factors in Growth

To see where this line of argument, *qua* economic theory, goes wrong needs a rather careful examination of what it is that crucially limits the amount of actual construction (or real investment, as economists call it) which a country can do at any one time. A non-economist might be inclined to answer: "the amount of finance available". But while this may have something to do with it in a capitalist society (especially at early stages of capitalism), reflection will show that no amount of finance can help unless there are sufficient *real resources* available to provide the economic means—building materials, constructional steel, raw materials and food supplies for the construction-workers and for the growing industrial army.

Some have said that if there is surplus labour there can be no real limit to what is possible in the way of an investment programme, since previously idle labour has only to be mobilised to construction tasks or to manning the new factories—an argument which has, indeed, made plausible the contention that increasing employment must be the primary aim. But labour needs instruments and materials with which to work; and if it is to be employed outside the village, there must be sufficient food supplies coming out of the villages on to the market to provide this industrial labour-force with an adequate level of subsistence. Hence in any given situation there will be a ceiling on the amount of labour that can be mobilised for constructional work or industrial production, and there will be a problem of using such labour in the most productive way.

Modern writers on the theory of growth have tended to stress something called the "savings ratio" (average ratio of saved, or unconsumed, income to total income) as the limiting factor; on the ground that it is the size of this which, on a national scale, determines how far resources can be released to provide the materials and the subsistence needed by newly employed labour. This is apt to lead to rather pessimistic conclusions in a poor country where average income is so low that nearly all income must be consumed. At any rate, it is looking at things within a capitalist framework, where "savings" are the product of the individual decisions of a host of individual capitalists; and the conclusion to which it points is that mass consumption must be reduced in order to give capitalists more income from which to "save".

It is true, of course, that when one studies the situation and tries to assess the actual possibilities in this or that underdeveloped country, one has usually to view it from the standpoint of capitalist relations of production, with all the financial and institutional limitations which these impose; since most of these countries remain essentially bourgeois countries, even if struggling for national independence and advancement. Yet there is a deeper standpoint from which one can and must view the problems of such countries if one is to reach a solid criterion for distinguishing good policies from bad—what is sound and what is unsound so far as their future historical development is concerned. For this one must adopt the standpoint of *social production*, and ask oneself how their basic problem would appear in a socialist planned economy, in which it is the state which is mobilising resources for investment and planning their optimum allocation and use. Looking at things in this way, we can see what is wrong with the "traditional" view that we have described above.

The Soviet Example

If we ask ourselves, for example, what were the crucial bottlenecks that confronted Soviet planning in the late twenties, on the eve of launching the first five-year plan, the answer is fairly clear. *Firstly*, it was the *marketed surplus of agriculture*, i.e. the amount of foodstuffs and raw materials over and above the consumption of the peasant producers

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(with their families) which was placed on the market outside the village, and hence was available to feed the growing urban population (growing as a result of increased employment in industry and construction). *Secondly*, it soon proved to be a bottleneck of constructional and building materials, in particular iron and steel and fuel and power; since new factories, steel mills, power plants and industrial towns could not be built faster than the bricks, cement and steel became available to put into them and the fuel and power to drive the new machinery when it had been installed.

It is roughly true, I think, that these two bottlenecks had to be tackled in the order in which I have stated them. As is now a familiar story, the first was tackled *politically* by breaking the position of dominance which the *kulaks* had formerly held in the market and by the drive to organise collective farms. But from the more strictly *economic* point of view (from which we are here discussing it) the problem consisted of raising the productivity of labour in agriculture by introducing mechanised agriculture in large farming-units; thereby increasing the surplus-product of agriculture available to feed the towns, while at the same time freeing labour from agriculture to go to swell the army of industrial workers.

Tackling the second bottleneck involved putting the bulk of what investment-potential was available (in the shape of materials and labour) into increasing the output of iron and steel and cement and machinery and fuel and power. This was called giving priority in development to heavy industry—to the output of capital goods or means of production (products of Marx's Dept. I). This, as we have seen, is the exact opposite of what the traditional bourgeois view prescribed.

What this amounts to, in general terms, is that to maximise the rate of economic growth one must concentrate whatever investment-potential one has upon methods and lines of production that will increase this investment-potential still further and increase it to the maximum possible extent. One must do this, at least, so far as is practicable in any given situation, after taking into account essential social needs (e.g. housing for the additional workers, health facilities, improved education, etc.). This is true whether the investment-potential is measured as a quantity of available labour, as a given surplus of agricultural products to provide a fund of subsistence or of working capital, or as a given output of steel. To this end available labour must be employed in the most productive manner, given the aim in view.

For this reason the most primitive "labour-intensive" techniques of production should *not* be chosen, even if at the moment these would be capable of affording a larger volume of employment. Instead, more productive, even if more costly, techniques must be used (up to a point) in order to raise the surplus product.[1] For analogous reasons capital goods (and the labour operating them) should be used so far as possible to turn out more capital goods—machine tools to make more machine tools rather than to make automatic looms or shoe-toe-lasters.

It can fairly easily be demonstrated (although I shall not try to do so here) that a high-growth-rate policy of this kind, directed towards the most rapid possible increase in the investment-potential, will very soon make both the growth-rate and the absolute level of employment and consumption higher than they would have been under the more cautious policy. The commonsense of this is, briefly, that a smaller share of a total that is growing fast can very soon become larger than a bigger share of a total that is growing more slowly.

One implication of this is that a country that has what economists have termed a low "savings-ratio" need not be as pessimistic about the possibilities of development as such countries have been made to feel in the past. It can have much greater hope of "pulling itself up by its own bootstraps", provided that it sets about the job in the right way. What matters for growth is not so much the size of the surplus product (or the investment-potential) with which a country *starts* (although, of course, the larger this is the more leeway it has at the starting-date), but the way this surplus product is *used* to promote *its own self-increase*. And this is one respect in which a planned economy has so great an advantage as an engine of rapid growth. A planned economy can first decide what is the point of concentration that is best from the point of view of society, and then mobilise resources and allocate them accordingly.

Critics of the Traditional View

Already in the middle-fifties there began to be some questioning of what I have called the traditional bourgeois view in academic journals.[2] The critics stressed that growth should be the main

[1] In this connection one may recall the remark of Stalin in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* that "surplus product as the sole source of accumulation . . . accumulation as the sole source of reproduction . . . all these fundamental tenets of the Marxian theory of reproduction . . . are tenets which hold good not only for the capitalist formation, and which no socialist society can dispense with in the planning of its national economy" (p. 89).

[2] The present writer in *Economie Appliquée*, 1954, No. 3 (reprinted in his *On Economic Theory and Socialism*) and in *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. XXIV (1956); A. K. Sen in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Nov. 1957. In the same direction were articles by Ch. Bettelheim in *Revue Economique*, Jan. 1957, and W. Galenson and H. Leibenstein in *Quarterly Journal of Econ.*, Aug. 1955.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

objective of policy in underdeveloped countries, and that this had different implications from the usual policy. But these criticisms were slow to make any full impact on thinking and discussion (with the exception of discussion among Indian economists, where similar ideas were voiced at the time of the first discussion of the Indian second five-year plan).[3] There was a tendency to go on thinking in terms of the old doctrine while relegating what the critics had said to the category of "special cases".

A number of questions still remained open: for example, how far and in what circumstances was a "dual" development justified, e.g. the development of "cottage industries" together with modern steel mills, as in the Indian second five-year plan, or the primitive village blast-furnaces alongside Anshan strip-mills in the year of the Chinese "great leap"? It was in the hope of presenting the case for the "high growth-rate policy", and its implications for planning, in a more general as well as more rigorous way that the present writer's *Essay on Economic Growth and Planning* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960) was written; as is also the aim (but with special reference to India) of Dr. A. K. Sen's recent book, *Choice of Techniques: an Aspect of the Theory of Planned Economic Development* (Blackwell, 1960).

Machines and Productivities: Theoretical Digression

Let us try to put the matter in a more general and theoretical form. When one is choosing between two techniques which represent different capital/labour ratios, what one is doing essentially, from a planning point of view, is choosing between employing more social labour in *making* machines and employing more labour in *operating* them. I say this for the reason that, generally speaking, more mechanised and labour-saving equipment will cost more to make, and the less mechanised and less labour-saving will be relatively cheaper. At least, this will be the case for any of the various types of technique that appear on the planning-agenda as *alternatives*, in a final selection-list from which choice has to be made. Obviously the only reason for choosing a type that costs more in preference to a cheaper one is that it results in a higher level of labour-productivity when in use. Hence one is weighing higher cost against higher productivity; and when arranging them in a list one will have at one end the very expensive but very productive types; at the other end less productive but cheaper. Of course, higher cost and higher productivity may not always go together: of two machine-models one may be more expensive than the other but no better. But then this one will not be worth considering, and no sensible planner would include it in the final list. On the other hand, some machines may be better than others from the standpoint of productivity and *also* less costly (or at least no more costly): then these will alone be worth including in the final list, and the others, being inferior with respect to both cost and efficiency, will not be worth considering. The final list would therefore consist of alternatives having different ratios of efficiency to cost—different ratios that could be represented by points on a two-dimensional graph and joined up in some kind of curve.

Expressing it in terms of labour: to say that the cost of a machine is high or low is equivalent to saying that the productivity of labour in machine-making is low or high respectively. Suppose the machines are tractors to be used in agriculture to produce corn. Then one's list (or curve) can be thought of as representing a series of linked labour-productivities in the tractor industry and in agriculture; so that as one moves along it, labour-productivity in the one case rises and in the other falls.

Looking at the matter in this way, it might seem to one that the obvious point in the list (or on the curve) to choose is where these two productivities when multiplied are at a maximum. (This would be a point where, as one moved up or down the list, the proportional, or percentage, change of corn-productivity would be equal to, and hence offset, the proportional change in labour cost of a tractor.) This is, however, what the traditional theory we described earlier would tell one to do. The crux of the argument that I tried to develop in my *Essay* was that in the interest of maximising growth one should choose a more mechanised technique than this—in our simplified example a more costly and efficient type of tractor that would make possible a higher level of labour-productivity in agriculture. This is on the assumption that what one wants to do in order to speed up growth is to maximise the surplus product in the hands of society (to provide the means for expanding employment in the capital goods sector—Marx's Dept. I).[4]

This does not mean, however, that one should always go to the top of the list and pick always the most technically efficient method available; since this would be very costly, and would involve such a (relatively) *low* level of productivity[5] in machine-making as to mean that, with a given size of labour-

[3] Largely owing to the influence of Professor P. C. Mahalanobis, who had presented a "growth model", inspired by Soviet development, in the Indian statistical journal, *Sankhya, 1953*.

[4] Or, alternatively, to provide goods for export in order to pay for imports of capital goods.

[5] When productivity is measured in terms of the *number* of machines turned out in, say, a month or a year.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

force employed in this sector, the annual output of this type of machine would be too small. What one gained on the swings, one would lose on the roundabouts!

How far it would be advantageous to go in this direction can be shown to depend on the prevailing relationship between labour-productivity and self-consumption by the producers (roughly equivalent to the level of wages). In general terms, this point in the list (or on the curve) that should be chosen can be defined quite precisely. At the risk of puzzling some readers, I will add that it is the point where the percentage change in productivity in machine-making, instead of being *equal* to the percentage change (of opposite direction) in productivity in the machine-*using* industry, is equal to the latter *multiplied by a certain magnitude*. This magnitude (which is always greater than one) is equal to:

$$\frac{\text{surplus product } \textit{plus} \text{ wages } (=\text{total product})^{6}}{\text{surplus product}}$$

Machines to Make Machines

One feature of any process of planned economic growth is worth mentioning, because it is connected with the question of giving priority to the capital goods sector—to the production of means of production. It will be clear that a large (even major) part of the produced means of production will be destined for further production *in this sector itself* (for so-called "expanded reproduction" in Dept. I).[7] This is a case of producing machine-tools to make machine-tools. In this sense growth will consist of a "circular process" of self-reproduction and expansion *within* the capital goods sector. This will always be the case to some extent so long as this sector is growing at all. The part played by this "circular process" will be greater, the faster the capital goods sector grows as compared with the consumers' goods sector. It is even conceivable that for a time growth should exclusively take this form.

What would be the advantage of doing so? The advantage could consist of either or both of two things. *Firstly*, in the course of using steel products to construct more steel mills, or using machines to make more machines, mills or machines of a more progressive and efficient type may be turned out than those that were originally installed. Thus machinery of a simpler and less efficient type may be used initially to produce (at a relatively high cost in labour) more complex and advanced types; and once the latter have replaced the old, the productivity of labour will be higher than it was originally. Hence, even though in the initial stage growth of output and employment may be rather slower, later on, after this initial stage is passed, growth can be much faster, because productivity in the capital goods sector has been raised to a new level.

Secondly, the "circular process" may be used to *widen* this sector by expanding both its capital equipment and its labour force. Thereby the potential output of capital goods, and hence the potential expansion of the economy in any of its branches and sectors in the future, will be raised.

Evidently a development process of this type, in either of its two forms, will be difficult and exceptional for a capitalist economy, since such an economy cannot look far enough ahead. Capitalists need to have an immediate market in view—or if not immediate, at least just round the corner. Whenever possible they will naturally produce for a demand that is visible and easily reached in preference to one that is remote in time and uncertain. Hence the traditional road of development is the one that the orthodox theory describes: "textiles first", as it has been labelled; capitalists developing first lighter consumers' goods industries (for a market in the underdeveloped country itself or for export); and then only at a much later stage (if at all) developing heavy industry, producing basic metals and chemicals and machinery.

A socialist economy can have a much wider time-horizon: it can make long-term plans that give at least the main perspectives of development for a decade or two, and in this framework it can organise various kinds of short cuts towards long-term goals. This is a crucial qualitative difference between a socialist economy and a capitalist,[8] which enables the former to follow a high growth-rate path instead of a slow one.

[6] In other words, it is the inverse of the share of surplus product in total product. This principle can be shown to apply, not only to Dept. II (producing consumers' goods), but also to Dept. I (capital goods), when machine tools need machine-tools as well as labour to produce them—on certain assumptions about the similarity of economic conditions in the two sectors (see Chapter IV of the above-mentioned *Essay*).

[7] Compare Marx's statement in Vol. II of *Capital:* "If production were socialised, instead of capitalist, it is evident that these products of Dept. I would just as regularly be redistributed as means of production to the various lines of production of this department, for purposes of reproduction, one portion remaining directly in that sphere of production which created it, another passing over to other lines of production of the same department, thereby entertaining a constant mutual exchange between the various lines of production of this department" (8th ed., p. 307).

[8] True, Lenin in the *Development of Capitalism in Russia* (chapter I, section VI) pointed out that under capitalism there was "production for the sake of production", and that to a certain extent Dept. I developed "independently" of Dept. II and faster than the latter. But this was subject to contradictions: because of the nature of capitalist relations of production, this only occurred in comparatively short "bursts" that were arrested by periodic crises.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is, however, one problem associated with this type of development which places a limit on the extent to which growth can take the form of the "circular process" that we have described. If the capital goods sector is developing faster than the consumer goods sector, then (unless rapid technical change is occurring) the output of the latter is expanding *less fast* than is the *total labour force* of both sectors combined. Hence, although consumption as a whole will be increasing (and hence the average standard of life will be rising), there will be a tendency towards a certain amount of *redistribution* of this consumption within the working class itself—a redistribution between those already employed in industry and those newly drawn into employment (e.g. coming from the villages into industry for the first time).

This problem seems to have presented itself in a number of the socialist countries at a certain stage of socialist industrialisation. There may well be offsetting influences raising productivity, such as socialist rationalisation, greater technical know-how, workers' initiative in improving production. But even when offset in these various ways, the tendency for employment to grow faster than the output-capacity of Dept. II will remain in the background as something which places a ceiling on the possibility of using this "circular process" within Dept. I as an engine of economic growth. In this connection it may be noted that over the past decade in the Soviet Union, when workers' living standards have been rising fast, the growth-rates of the two sectors of industry have been much closer together than they were in the pre-war decade and in the years of post-war reconstruction.

Prices and Choice of Method of Production

What was said above about the right and wrong choice of technique has, I believe, some quite important implications for the principles on which a socialist economy should base its price-structure. Decisions about investment policy, including decisions about technical methods of production (e.g. when to replace old machinery by new), will be taken at various levels. In its major outlines policy will be determined, of course, by the planning commission. At the same time, a good deal of the initiative in so-called "project-making" (preparing and choosing between technical blueprints for new constructions) has come in the Soviet Union from the various industries—and presumably comes today from the economic councils of the 120-odd economic regions into which the country is now divided. Some of the initiative, again, comes from the level of individual factories and enterprises, which in any case have the responsibility for implementing planning policy in detail and for repair and maintenance of plant and equipment. Moreover, industrial enterprises may have discretion about minor investment outlays (to varying extents in different socialist countries).

At all these levels the decisions taken are bound to be influenced to a considerable extent by prices—by the price of one type of machine compared with another and of machines compared with the level of wages; of coal compared with electricity; of cement, bricks or timber; of steel with aluminium; of different qualities of steel or ores. Most obviously of all will decisions be so influenced at the lowest level, that of the industrial enterprise; since the enterprise will be striving to reduce the cost of its planned output and to show a positive margin between its output (valued at the planned prices) and the sum of its inputs. Even at the top level decisions will be influenced by prices to the extent that calculations are used which take values into account.

Plainly, if in choosing between different methods of production the decisions taken are to be such as will make for the highest growth of the economy as a whole, it is important that the relative prices of different commodities should be adjusted appropriately. It may be noted that in recent years in the Soviet Union increasing emphasis has been laid upon this question of choosing the most economic technique, in order to get the most effective all-round use out of a given investment-programme. (A resolution of the Twenty-First Party Congress spoke of "the outstanding significance of the most effective direction of capital investment, providing for the least expenditure of means in cultivating productive power".)

One example of this was a recent argument about the relative merits of hydro-electric and thermal power-plants (referred to in a speech by Khrushchov); the question here largely turning on the advantage of "saving time" by a quicker turnover of investment funds, since hydro-electric stations, in addition to costing more initially, take longer to build.

Maximum Economy of Labour

Reverting to our theoretical argument about what is the right type of technique to choose: this amounted to saying that the distribution of labour should be so planned between *making* machines and *operating* them as to enable a given labour force to make the maximum contribution to growth. Thus, it was in effect a principle of maximum economy of labour that we were enunciating.

Yet at the same time a principle of maximum economy of labour *qualified in a particular way*. Such a principle if *un*qualified might seem to indicate choosing the most-productive-known techniques, since these would yield the highest labour productivity for the labour using these methods. But we

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have seen that this would *not* necessarily be the best thing to do, because the techniques in question would probably cost too much labour in the making for them to be made in a sufficiently large quantity.

This would be no problem, of course, if the capital goods sector were sufficiently large and there was no limit to the amount of labour that could be absorbed into it. It would be no problem under communism when socialist accumulation had built up the productive power of society (including the productive capacity of Dept. I) to a requisite level. But it *does* remain a problem at the stage of socialism, when productive power is still in process of being developed, and in particular when there are limits (such as those we discussed above) to the total output capacity of the sector producing capital goods.

This means that the principle of maximum economy of labour has to be applied *subject to a given limit or constraint:* namely, the constraint of the *given productive capacity of Dept. I*, which places a ceiling on the total investment programme (*i.e.* the total of new constructions and techniques) that can be planned in any given year. In so far as this total depends on what we have called the "surplus product" of society, this is the relevance of the equation defining technique which was mentioned above.

It is also relevant, I believe, to the question of prices; and it is relevant in this way: namely, that the price of a commodity ought to be adjusted under socialism so as to include, not merely the wage-cost of its production, but also some measure of the extent to which it has made a claim upon the social investment-fund (e.g. by adding to the wage-cost an allowance for "surplus product", proportioned to the size of the capital/labour ratio in that line of production). Moreover, I suggest that this principle should apply to the prices *both* of capital goods *and* of consumer goods; since, although it is true that the former are only transfer-prices at which capital goods pass from one state enterprise to another (and not actual market prices), the "correct" choice of methods of production will not be made in both sectors unless these transfer-prices are treated uniformly with the prices of consumers' goods.

What Price-Structure for a Socialist Economy

Discussion of price-policy in the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries has centred round two main questions. *First* there is the question of the "two price-levels". One should explain that hitherto the "transfer prices" of all capital goods (products of Group A industries) have been based (with a few exceptions) on their prime cost (*sebestoimost*), which is virtually the *wage*-cost of their production (including the wage-cost of raw material inputs) with the addition of a depreciation-allowance on capital equipment and a *small* profit-margin. The same is true of the price of consumer goods at the level of production (*i.e.* of the industrial enterprise). But consumer goods as sold retail to consumers are priced at a higher level than this: a level which includes the so-called Turnover Tax (together with the costs and profit-margins of the distributive enterprises). This Turnover Tax represents part of that social "surplus product" of which we have spoken above.

The question is: should this be replaced by a *uniform* price-level for both capital goods and consumers' goods; this price-level being built up in *both* cases so as to include a proportional allowance for this "surplus product" (as has been done hitherto *only* in the case of consumers' goods)?

Secondly, there is the question whether, if the price-structure were to be reformed in this way, the appropriate principle for fixing individual prices should be "values" (in the sense of Marx's Vol. I) or "prices of production" (that "transformed form of value" of which Marx spoke in Vol. III).

These are still matters of keen controversy in the Soviet Union, on which discussion continues. What has been said about them here must be regarded as simply the expression of a personal opinion. Before one leaves the subject, however, one should perhaps add this. To any such principles there must, of course, be numerous exceptions in particular cases, if only temporarily as in the case of specially scarce products or lines or grades. But this would not prevent prices, constructed on such principles, from playing the role of "standard prices" or "target prices" at which to aim (e.g. in adjusting outputs of different products) and of accounting prices for taking decisions about investment-policy and technique. There is also the question of the role of prices, whether as indicators or as incentives, in encouraging, in the consumer goods sector, a better adjustment of production to the pattern of consumers' demand. But that is another story, on which one cannot embark here.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fatigue and Accidents

Frank McKenna

IN recent years the new and important science of Ergonomics has begun to interest workers, trade unionists, doctors, industrialists and research workers. Taking its name from the Greek word "Ergon", meaning work, this science is fundamentally the study of the relationships between a man and his working environment. Ergonomic research encompasses the following wide fields.

1. Work Study.
2. Fatigue, stress, and discomfort at work which affects productivity and safety.
3. Accidents which are due to the failure of the human element to react speedily to audible or visible signals, flashing signs, needle-dials or scale measuring instruments of various types.
4. Human reactions under stress cconditions.
5. Machine control—moving or stationary.
6. Posture during the working period.
7. Equipment design and best use of same.

These are some of the problems which face ergonomists, but this new science also fringes on experimental psychology, physiology, anatomy, industrial medicine and cybernetics. Whilst it is true that knowledge of these by most industrial workers must be largely peripheral, a working knowledge of the science is a useful addition to the knowledge of trade unionists in transport, engineering and science.

A Department of Ergonomics and Cybernetics was recently established at Loughborough University, and it seems that Tube Investments Ltd. are the first big firm in Britain to institute a Research Department on Ergonomics in Britain.

As a trade unionist, I believe that a study of ergonomics takes us into the deep end of the class struggle. Increased productivity and safety at work are, quite often, not parallel, but opposite sides of a situation. Trade unionists should be wary of plausible ergonomic technicians who arrive to demonstrate their techniques of laying out a job better for "everyone's sake".

The whole aproach of capitalist management is to obtain maximum production, the largest slice of profit, and to provide the minimum of safety precautions. Minimising accidents has always been a huge problem under breakneck capitalist production techniques; sometimes a bad accident is costly to a management, hence the idea of full production with a better system of safety precautions becomes a matter for the ergonomist.

Accidents and Fatigue

An important aspect of ergonomic research has been into the causes of railway, road and aircraft accidents over the last few years. The British Medical Research Council is actively interested in the question of train accidents, with particular regard to the mental state of drivers at the time of the accident. Doctors frequently sit at enquiries following such accidents, and the transport unions are assisting as far as possible. Recent years have seen the public conscience shattered by train smashes such as Harrow, in 1952, and Lewisham, in 1957, involving huge loss of life.

The rising toll of road deaths, loss of air liners and the passengers and crew—how do these accidents occur? Is it the human element, structural faults, or both, which hold the answers to these questions?

Ergonomists are trying to discover the reason why unaccountable accidents occur, despite the valuable modern aids to navigation, speed and safety. Why are people unable to react to messages being communicated to them by warning signals?

At Cambridge, in 1959, a number of aeroplane pilots underwent tests which simulated situations normal to their working day. After fifteen minutes at the controls these fit, intelligent and responsible men were suffering from fatigue. Further investigation of 270 accidents involving air pilots found that 13 per cent of the accidents were due to pilots misreading the altimeter by as much as 1,000 feet. Such wide errors open fruitful fields for ergonomic research.

And yet it is a different type of fatigue which caused the plane crash at Southall, Middlesex, in 1958. The pilot of that aircraft was suffering from strain due to overwork and insufficient rest.

In serious accidents, diminished responsibility owing to a backlog of fatigue might not be accepted as a defence, but I believe it to be true that loss of instinctive reaction due to fatigue of brain and muscle is the unknown quantity in many forms of accidents.

The Unknown Factor

Many reasons have been advanced from different quarters why accidents are still occurring, despite the numerous mechanical and scientific aids to safety. Ergonomics today leaves the problem on far too clinical a plane for transport and factory workers to remain satisfied.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When we consider the human being under stress conditions, the part played by worry, which creates fatigue, is rarely considered. A man who is beset by domestic worries, such as low wages, rent, health and family affairs is rarely able to give his undivided attention to his work.

Uncertainty on the domestic scene leads to loss of concentration at work—scientific aids are useless in attempting to overcome human failure to react to instruments and ringing or flashing warnings.

Far too many accidents are caused by sheer inability of the muscles to obey the brain, owing to fatigue of the worker. As scientific aids to greater productivity and higher speeds continue to develop, so I believe accidents will increase proportionately. Until we can discover the limits of concentration, the effects of worry and distractions, human capacity for stress, and the number of instruments with which an operator can cope, so accidents will continue.

Accidents and Strain

Locomotive drivers, long-distance lorry drivers, and even men whose job involves a smaller amount of driving a vehicle, i.e., commercial travellers, face in Britain a climate of eight months of fog, snow and rain. Too often the margin between safety and accident is a stationary coloured or flashing light, or a needle flickering over a dial, and little else.

For transport workers it is exacerbated by long hours of duty, cold, lack of proper meals and exposure to the elements. An unknown level of fatigue builds up and it ends often in an accident to the person involved, and sometimes many more. I would say that many road accidents are caused because the driver has been far too long at the wheel. Locomotive drivers in my own experience, often work far past the level of fatigue and strain which should be allowed on work of this nature.

A Class Outlook

Up to the present ergonomics has escaped the political microscope; trade unionists should now be demanding that the science be investigated by capable trade union leaders who could advise what attitude workers should adopt to this question.

It is said that ergonomics can mean more work for less effort. It is interesting that John Stuart Mill says in his *Principles of Political Economy*: "It is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet invented have lightened the toil of any human being." Ergonomics have revealed that when the heavily labouring work has been removed from a task, the strain is quite often transferred from a physical task to a mental burden.

Ergonomists are interested in the mental and physical loads a man can bear, and research has proved that the human frame and mind can bear enormous levels of strain and responsibility. But Dr. Wilkie, of the Department of Psychology, University College of London, has warned: "For a short period of time, very heavy work can be performed, but the total power diminishes the longer the exercise continues." This aspect of industrial ergonomics is surely a pressing problem as mechanisation and automation continues to change the conditions and circumstances of thousands of workers.

In a paper read to the Brunel College of Technology, Mr. A. T. Welford, made the following points:

1. The range of decisions channelled through one person should be limited;
2. Experimental psychology has a useful part to play in ergonomics, because: (*a*) there are conflicts of aim between people; (*b*) irrational antipathies exist between people.

Despite this perception of the class struggle, Mr. Welford continued by saying that very little was known about these questions. Mr. Welford should sit in on discussions on wages and hours between workers and capitalists—he would then discover that "conflicts of aim" and "irrational antipathies" have been part of the struggle for class power for centuries.

Some Conclusions

At the moment, ergonomics can be seen as a clearly bourgeois science. The present high priests of ergonomics have shown that basic class attitudes are involved in discussion of ergonomic propositions.

Vast human and technological problems are being created through the modern machine economy. Conflicts are inevitable between workers and management, on questions of machine control, safety precautions and distribution of profits. Originating a science to discuss man's relationship with his machine and how to make his job easier is a laudable objective, but more is involved here than increasing efficiency in the interests of higher profit.

Avoidance of accidents and the saving of unnecessary labour are important questions for workers, especially when they are producing for themselves within a socialist economy. May I say in conclusion, that the purpose of these observations is to warn workers against a new technique which can increase production without a consequent increase in workers' wages and conditions. If a discussion can be sparked off as a result of these observations this article will have served its purpose, for workers and scientists alike.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Bow Group's Planning Proposals

Irwin Ross

THE latest Bow Group pamphlet, euphemistically entitled *Let Our Cities Live,* would have been better called "Planned Speculation in the Green Belt." Proposals are put forward for serious consideration which are not merely crude and naive but also pernicious, revealing the real intentions of Tory "theoreticians." Behind all the high-sounding phrasemongering about the plight of the conurbations and the big cities are outrageous schemes for strengthening the monopoly interests' grip on our large cities at the expense of the public sector, and local authorities in particular.

Even *The Times* is forced to comment editorially on the activities of the bright young hopes of the Conservative Central Office: ". . . a welcome addition to the not very substantial library of constructive Conservative thinking on the subject of town planning." It is clear that the *Times* leader-writer is working on the well-tried Tory principle that anything is better than nothing.

The central thesis presented is the need for the conurbations to grow and spread whilst their older parts should be redeveloped more speedily. The Bow Group, with the lucrative target of the Green Belt before them, set out to demolish the remaining vestiges of land-use planning. The property market has been preparing the way for them assiduously over the last few years. Large scale speculative gambling over Green Belt land in the hope that it would soon—at least in part—come on to the land market for building purposes, has been going on continually.

The guilt of the capitalist class for the nineteenth-century legacy of industrial cities, despoiled town and country, and desperate housing problem is, of course, not mentioned. But we are left in no doubt that the only kind of economic system the Bow Boys want is unbridled laissez-faire capitalism.

> "Worst of all," they write, "are the increasing endeavours to throttle that expansion which economic forces make natural and inevitable. . . ."
>
> "Events have proved that the city cannot be successfully fought against."

They demand: "Let the city spread and grow but in a controlled and guided expansion." They think that "The Green Belt policy as it stands is out of date," and want "fingers of high density development to reach out into country parkland."

One would think that the efforts of progressive town planners to restrict the growth of our conurbations were responsible for the chaotic state of our cities, and not the predatory activities of the "captains of industry".

Industrial and Commercial Location

The authors ignore the major problems which have been revealed more and more recently; the reappearance of patterns all too well known in the thirties, the decline of entire areas, neglected industries, the drift of population southwards.

The complete failure to restrict the growth of office and other employment at the centres of the relatively more prosperous conurbations, particularly the Birmingham and Greater London regions, is passed over in silence.

The concept of economic planning is clearly a subversive idea. The primordial question of planned industrial location is inconvenient to the thesis of natural expansion where profits are highest.

They show little comprehension of the urgent nature and tremendous size of the overspill problem, which is mentioned without facing the central question of industrial and commercial location. They join in the fashionable Tory dismissal of New Town building on the grounds that they have failed to solve the problem of restricting urban growth in the London region. Yet, despite lip-service paid to the alarming "growth of office accommodation in Central London," the solution offered is not the freezing of office building and the removal of offices to New or Expanded towns. Having embraced natural economic growth, they logically lay claim to further office or commercial development at district centres under the disguise of "dispersal." Suggest abandoning the free-for-all process of land grabbing for lucrative developments in already overcrowded city centres; suggest the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

planning of industrial and commercial location where jobs are really needed, so that a *real* contribution to the replanning of the conurbations becomes possible; suggest compulsive legislation to prevent industry from going where the directors want it to go, or an industrial levy so that industry pays its real share for urban renewal, for the congestion and dislocation which its continued presence in the heart of our cities' residential areas all too often causes—and you will be accused of advocating a planned economy!

As the *New Statesman* (6.1.61) remarks: "To allow them [the conurbations—I.R.] to grow would simply add to the internal pressures on space, make conditions even more intolerable for a greater number, and retard redevelopment to satisfactory standards."

What nonsense for the authors to pose the problem of restricting the size and growth of cities against the obvious advantages that city life may offer! "Hell is a city" for many people today. The vaunted economic advantages of concentration have become disadvantages to the majority of ordinary people, who must endure overcrowding within the home, too many houses per acre, too few parks or playing fields, long hours of travel each day to and from work, an amorphous social framework, a physical environment rapidly bordering on total anarchy.

Only restriction in the growth and size of the conurbations, London, Birmingham, Merseyside, Liverpool, West Yorkshire, Tyneside, and Glasgow can, in fact, ensure that the public open spaces, the community facilities, new schools and sports grounds, hospitals, etc., that are needed, find the space which modern standards demand.

The Tories, by their deliberate policy of encouraging unplanned economic growth in the very areas that planned to disperse both workplaces and homes, have attempted to destroy the validity of post-war plans for a national policy of industrial decentralisation. Likewise, by abolishing the development charges and returning to a free market in land, the Tories have so inflated land values that the cost of acquiring land for green wedges or public open spaces is prohibitive. Could the authors tell us what is commercially profitable in providing public open spaces or city parks, or those "green wedges" they so vaguely want to see brought into the heart of our cities? The Bow Group is not concerned with this. Their full-blooded Toryism, lacking subtlety as well as a detailed knowledge of the facts, leads the *Times* editorial, already mentioned, to caution:

> It is doubtful, too, whether they have thought thoroughly about their ideas on Green Belts ("we do not want Green Belts; we want a Green Britain"), the ultimate choice to be made concerning traffic in Central London, or their objections to development charges (but not, of course, compensation).

Packing the Cities

Under the pretext of ensuring the maximum use of land, the Group advocate high density living. But as they, of course, oppose subsidies and all local authority house building to rent, except slum clearance, who but the well-to-do could afford their economic rental flats? Such is the sort of context they envisage for their modest proposals.

This argument about maximum land use is a central question. But it is not simply a question of working-class redevelopment projects. The real wastage of land is due to the absence of effective planning in general, and the acceptance of an outer ring of extremely low density zoning, applied, above all, but not exclusively, to middle- and upper middle-class residential areas. It is sometimes a question of one density for the rich and another for the poor. A well-known building firm is currently building houses in South London for £15,000 at probably six houses to the acre. In the Gorbals, in parts of Liverpool, working men, women and children still live in the most frightful slums at densities of up to 400 persons per acre.

By all means, conserve the land by effective and intelligent planning, by raising standards of layout and design. But if standards are to be considered, what about the lowering of housing standards, first initiated in the now infamous "People's House" by Macmillan when Minister of Housing? Furthermore, it is noticeable that no suggestion for a *minimum* residential density is made in the Bow pamphlet. This would be an essential element in any concerted policy to reduce the level of land used for housing and yet provide a flexible upper standard for redevelopment densities to comply with many varied conditions to be met with in our cities.

Vigilance is called for. We want no more "beautiful" low density, twelve to the acre or less, one-class suburbs at the expense of overcrowded areas of high density dwellings or flats, with but the barest social facilities and open space amenities. The political pressure is on for solutions to the housing problem. Theory and practice, promise and fulfillment are not identical where the Tories are concerned. Certainly, not when they begin to discover the virtues of high density living in the urban jungle which they themselves have created in their insatiable greed after super profits.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two New Cities

The most interesting and contradictory proposal is for two New Cities, each planned for an ultimate population of at least 300,000 to 400,000; one in Lincolnshire, the other in Somerset. The idea that there is still life in the old capitalist dog is amusing; the idea that *natural economic forces* making for bigger conurbations can at the same time be *persuaded* and *channelled* by *positive planning* to just go to a Lincolnshire Fen and create a new city, replete with all that goes with it, is arrant nonsense.

Certainly, new major projects of New Town character are urgently required, planned in conjunction with large-scale urban redevelopment and smaller town expansion schemes. But the idea that a Tory Government will voluntarily undertake such schemes and strengthen the public sector is an illusion and a confidence trick. But any "solution" which makes no provision for halting the drift to the south-east and adjusting the regional balance of the country is doomed to failure. New life must be brought to the old industrial areas like Tees-side and South Wales.

The pressure of the entire Labour movement, the support of the widest cross-section of professional and technical workers in the inter-related fields of architecture, planning, engineering, and building is needed to force not only the political change which is necessary, but a number of related solutions that will make life richer and more satisfactory. Above all, those acres of dreadful, cheerless, dingy streets of back-to-backs must come down and we must demand the richer pattern of life that can be built in those early, poor quality, speculative, suburban estates, which will soon need to be pulled down and replaced.

The gimmick of the Bow Group should be seen for what it is—a variant of the whip and the carrot. One of these days they will realise that it is not the working people that are the asses.

Redevelopment Blocks

The most outrageous and quite idiotic suggestion that hardly warrants examination is for a land pooling system to enable private enterprise to acquire, compulsorily, property for comprehensive redevelopment without the local authority having anything to do with it.

The Times gently bounces the Bow Boys, commenting somewhat drily: "They do not exaggerate in describing this as revolutionary to the concept of property ownership in this country."

The only role the pamphlet assigns to local authorities in the task of redevelopment is to carry the unprofitable burden of slum clearance alone—the traditional Tory concept of municipal housing for "the poorest section." Gone is the vision of the "affluent state," of social services and public welfare.

This particular variant of the current Tory theme, the strengthening of the private sector, and the consequent weakening of the public, is particularly stupid, but the moral should be drawn.

As was pointed out in *Marxism Today* (July 1960)—"Lessons from Piccadilly"—the public ownership of land in cities, measures to alleviate the financial difficulties of local authorities faced with urban redevelopment problems, the replacement of the financial provisions which existed under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act with something immediately applicable and comprehensible, are all urgently necessary. It must be made possible for local authorities of towns with large decayed areas to declare areas ripe for public ownership and comprehensive redevelopment, undertaken by large-scale, strategically placed direct labour organisations.

Regional Planning

No Bow variant on the many local government *ad hoc* committees which already exist, dubbed Regional Planning Councils, should be allowed to confuse the issue.

Real Regional Planning can only become a reality with two-tier conurbation authorities, fully-elected by popular vote. Reform of local government (as Harry Bourne recently pointed out in *Marxism Today*) is long overdue. Without this transformation, effective regional planning will be hamstrung by the conflicting claims of authorities whose boundaries were anachronistic a half century ago, let alone in 1961.

Saner Voices

J. B. Cullingworth, in *The Problem of Overspill*, a Fabian Research Series pamphlet, argues forcibly and rightly for overspill to be regarded as a national problem "which should be financed from the national Exchequer." He writes: "If further New Towns are not forthcoming then it must be accepted that the policies of dispersal, of safeguarding Green Belts and preventing urban sprawl are in grave danger, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool all need at least one development of New Town character immediately; London needs six."

It is widely held, beyond Marxist and even

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leftish circles, that "a redefinition of aims is long overdue" with regard to the so-called "Development Areas" or declining areas — the more appropriate term. Professor M. J. Wise states the case in a recently published lecture:[1]

> "If it is seriously the national wish to improve the industrial base of development areas, it is necessary to institute carefully planned programmes of large-scale investment to upgrade the basic conditions for industrial development of, for example, South Wales, Durham, West Central Scotland and others.
>
> First and foremost must come the development of the transport nets of these areas to improve their accessibility by sea, road and rail."

To stop the rot at source, improve the generally poorer housing conditions, lack of social services and basic utilities, etc., demands large-scale planned investment. Once again, the success of the struggle for a disarmament agreement and peaceful coexistence, for profound political change, is the precondition for real advance in improving our cities and countryside. To do this effectively, the urgent priority is to defeat the Tories.

---

[1] *Industrial Location—A Geographical Approach* —by M. J. Wise, published by the London School of Economics, 1960.

Discussion contribution

On How Did Man Originate?

John Lewis

IN the November issue an article appeared on this topic by Karl Sacher, which requires some comment.

One of the happier aspects of coexistence is the breakdown of the old barriers between the socialist and the capitalist worlds in the fields of science and the arts. Today Russian scientists read all our scientific periodicals and papers, while here, and even more in America, there are translation projects covering all departments of Soviet science. This is as it should be and surely marks the end of that period in which "bourgeois science" was condemned and Marxist science exalted into a superior category. The Moscow surgeons did not reject our heart machine because it was "capitalist", nor did we reject corneal grafting because it was "Bolshevist"!

It is, therefore, with regret that we find all the old prejudices and sectarian distortions in Sacher's article. This is seen not only in the frequent references to hordes of anti-evolutionists, whom I have never met, or heard of, and in the references to "bourgeois ideology" (real enough in the fields of sociology, economics, religion and philosophy, of course), but especially in the total ignoring of all the work in this important field which has been done during the past thirty years. This work has brought about a complete revolution in our knowledge of human origins, based on an immense amount of new material, new fossils of pre-men and early men, and important links with the more unspecialised anthropoids and monkey-like primates. There is also, of course, the exposure of the Piltdown forgery. On the basis of all this evidence pretty general unanimity has been arrived at in this field. The results are admirably summed up in W. LeGros Clark's *Antecedents of Man. An Introduction to the Evolution of the Primates*. I can say with confidence that this work is entirely unaffected by any bourgeois influences, and is on the contrary thoroughly scientific and materialistic.

Karl Sacher appears not to know of all this work. He quotes not a single authority from the 127 important works listed in LeGros Clark's *Fossil Evidence for Human Evolution*. He gives the results of Soviet research workers as if they alone had reached conclusions which are, as a matter of fact,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

generally accepted. He is probably unaware that Soviet anthropologists are fully acquainted with the results of the investigations I have mentioned and do not themselves adopt his sectarian tone.

When Sacher tries to relate the causes of evolutionary change to the origin of man once again he shows that he does not know of recent genetical discoveries and tendencies, as, for instance, the conclusions of Waddington's *Strategy of the Genes*, and about a dozen other important contributions to this question. These fully allow for the interaction of gene complexes and the environment, and deal with all the objections to evolution through the survival of favourable small mutations mentioned by Sacher.

He still seems to regard Lysenko as a final authority in these matters in spite of the fact that he has recently been subjected to severe criticisms in the Soviet Union.

It would be useless to go point by point through this article unless one were writing for a technical journal, but it must be said that writing of this kind in no way represents the objective and open-minded scientific work being done in all fields in the Soviet Union today.

A rather typical mistake is to make the main cause of evolution the response of the organism to environmental change. This is the famous return to the equilibrium theory of Herbert Spencer, which he described as "the adjustment of internal to external relations", a position also taken up by Bukharin and Bogdanov. This theory of equilibrium, which had been criticised by Engels in *Anti-Duhring* and subsequently by Soviet Marxists, was very popular among the opposition groups among Russian Social Democrats.

Now evolution does not take place by the response of the organism to environmental pressure, for even if the environment does not alter evolution still takes place. What actually happens is a movement to make the organism more *independent* of the environment, evolution in a progressive direction. Mere submission to environmental demands would not lead to progress at all. Now especially when we come to the evolution of man we find this taking place without any environmental change, for example in South Africa, where Australopithecus emerged in desert conditions. Once man has appeared, so far from his further evolution being further adaptation to the environment, it now becomes entirely the modification of the environment by man, so that human evolution is the mastery of the environment by successive technological advances, each requiring advances in social organisation. The question is fully discussed by Sherokov in the textbook of Marxist Philosophy.

MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY

MARX HOUSE, 37A, CLERKENWELL GREEN, LONDON, E.C.1
Tel: CLErkenwell 1485

The Marx Memorial Library has instituted an annual competition for the best essay, in the judgement of a panel appointed by its Committee, on a subject discussed in the spirit of Marxism. Literary style will not necessarily be the first consideration guiding the judges.

The essay should not be more than 800 words in length.

A prize of books to the value of £5, and chosen if possible by the successful competitor, will be awarded each year.

For this year the subject is: *MARXISM AND NATIONAL DEFENCE.*

Entries must reach the SECRETARY, MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 37A, CLERKENWELL GREEN, LONDON, E.C.1, *by first post on May 1st next. Further particulars can be obtained from the same address.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Collet's Column — No. 1

Folkways Records are here

A MAN WITH AN IDEA is someone to watch. If his idea is a big one, watch him more closely. The world of gramophone records watches Moses Asch so closely, that little of what he does escapes notice.

This is not surprising. A man responsible for publishing 700 records, ranging all the way through the FOLKWAYS catalogue, is always likely to have something new up his sleeve.

If he had not, the achievement of his present catalogue would be astounding enough. Astounding on its own account, and more so when it has come about without the aid of big money, due only to the imagination and persistence of its creator.

Moe Asch had a good start. Born in Poland, a son of the famous writer, Sholem Asch, he inherited the richness of a close contact with ordinary people. Today, his human contacts are numbered in thousands, and hundreds of them are associated with him in one way or another to produce gramophone records of a particular quality and interest.

The title, FOLKWAYS, indicates the main interest, and no monopoly recording company can compare with the wealth of folk music, genuine folk music, which Asch has gathered from remote parts of the earth. Primitive, tribal and ethnic music is the speciality of FOLKWAYS, and some five hundred ethnic and regional groups are claimed to be represented.

But this is not all. Languages, social structure, literature, jazz, work and play songs, crowd into the FOLKWAYS list, offering a selection of traditional material into which the intelligent collector may dip with delight.

At one time, it was a rare adventure to lay hands on a FOLKWAYS record. Today, it is simplified by COLLET'S who, as the sole importers of these records, carry a high proportion of the catalogue in their stocks, and can bring over any exception within fifteen days.

COME AND CHOOSE YOUR RECORDS WHEN YOU ARE IN LONDON, or write for lists and catalogues.

Collet's

Record Shops

70 New Oxford St., London, W.C.1
(MUSeum 3224)

72 Heath St., Hampstead, N.W.3
(HAMpstead 6669)

"Room to Live and Breathe"

Under this title a discussion on aspects of town planning and the use of Britain's land will be held on

Saturday, February 25th, 1961

from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

at

FRIENDS HOUSE

EUSTON ROAD, LONDON, N.W.1

Organised jointly by the Cultural Committee and the Social Services Committee of the Communist Party, it will give Party members an opportunity to study problems of fundamental importance to such campaigns as those for better housing, more open spaces and cultural facilities, and a solution of the traffic problem.

Party members wishing to attend, especially councillors and candidates, should write for credential form to:

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 King Street, London, W.C.2.

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U. all depts.) Aldenham, Herts.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISARMAMENT AND COLONIAL FREEDOM

N. S. Khrushchov

This book brings together the speeches made by N. S. Khrushchov as head of the Soviet delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Sept. to Oct. 1960; interviews given by him in America; and the speech made upon his return to the U.S.S.R.

5s.

To appear shortly:

FUNDAMENTALS OF MARXISM-LENINISM

ed. **O. Kuusinen**

An up-to-date textbook of political theory. Its scope is indicated by the headings of its five parts: *Philosophical Foundations; The Materialist Conception of History; Political Economy of Capitalism; Theory and Tactics of the International Communist Movement; Socialism and Communism.*

15s.

THE ADVENTURERS

Margot Heinemann

". . . the most considerable and the most formidable new novel in English I have read this year."

—New Statesman

". . . One enjoys it for her sober picture of one aspect of the modern world. . . ."

—The Observer

". . . The best working-class novel I've read for years."

—Tribune

16s.

ROOM AT THE BOTTOM

National Insurance in the Welfare State

Katherine Hood

". . . not only helpful but absolutely necessary in dealing with . . . this most hotly debated subject."

—Foundry Workers' Journal

3s. 6d.

AFRICA: THE ROOTS OF REVOLT

Jack Woddis

". . . The real name for what goes on there . . . is Exploitation. And . . . it is useful that someone should say so as clearly as Mr. Woddis does in his new book."

—New Statesman

21s.

Appearing in February:

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JAMES CONNOLLY

C. Desmond Greaves

35s.

SOCIALISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

John Lewis

5s.

Distributed by Central Books Ltd., 37 Grays Inn Road, W.C.1

LAWRENCE & WISHART

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BASIC MARXIST READING

Central Books
37 Grays Inn Rd
London WC1

ON MARX'S CAPITAL
ENGELS 1s

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE
MARX 9d

SOCIALISM UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC
ENGELS 6d

ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY
ENGELS 1s 6d

THE HOUSING QUESTION
ENGELS 9d

and available again

★ ★

THE CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAMME
MARX 6d

what is CHINA doing?

PEKING REVIEW

brings you up-to-date first-hand coverage on China's political, economic and cultural developments, international relations and domestic and foreign policies

airmailed to you weekly 24s *a year*

CHINA PICTORIAL

shows you in brilliant and colourful illustrations China's splendid achievements in the construction of socialism and a free and happy life for her people

monthly 15s *a year*

also French, Spanish and German editions

CHINESE LITERATURE

offers you the cream of China's contemporary and classical literature and art, enhanced by magnificent reproductions of modern and folk artists' works

monthly 15s *a year*

Central Books
37 Grays Inn Rd
London WC1

I enclose £.....:.....s for the following subscriptions

names of journals .....

.....

.....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

MTD2

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED